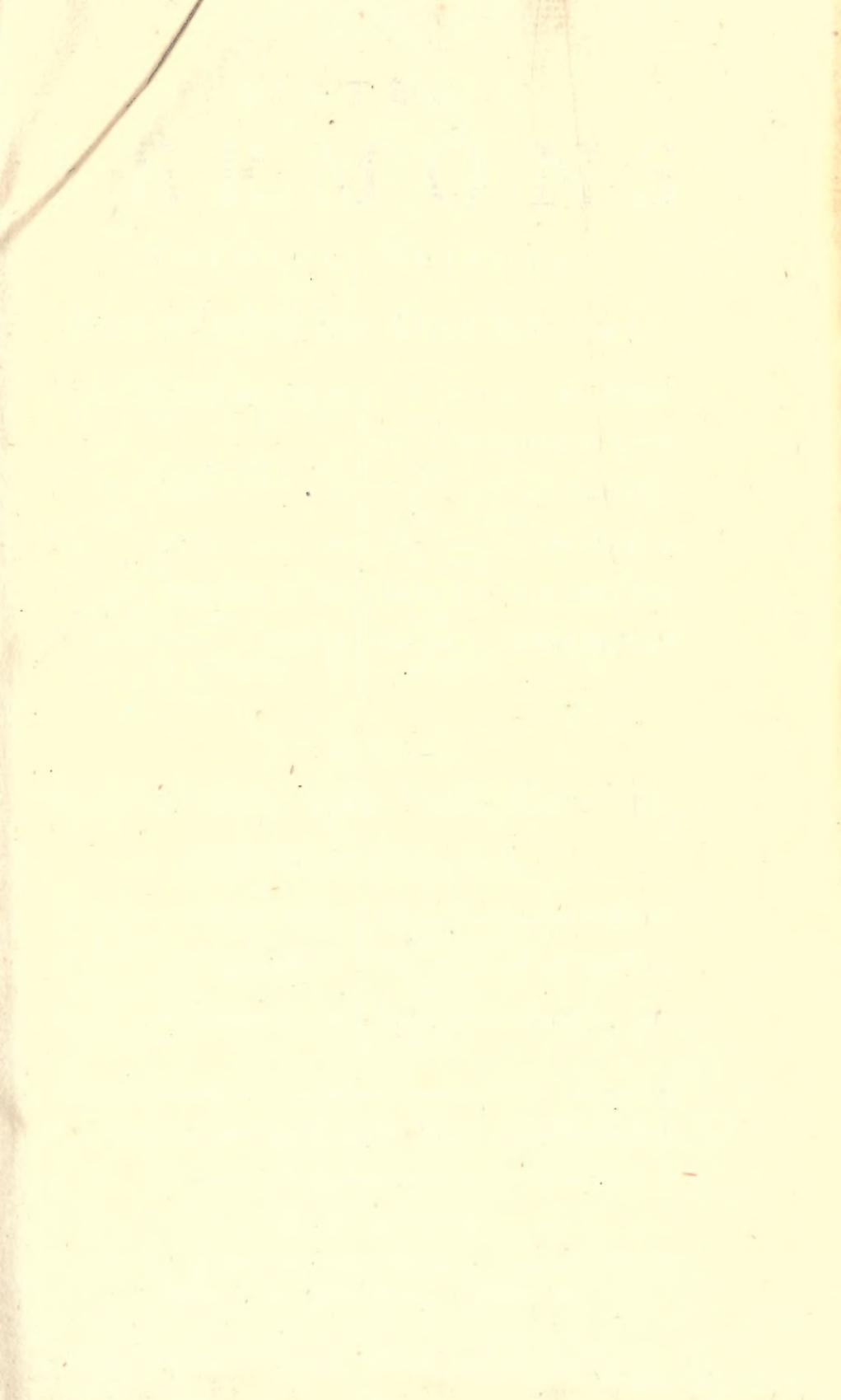


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SIXTEEN SERMONS

FORMERLY PRINTED,

Now collected into ONE VOLUME.

Of the Evils falsely imputed to Christianity. In Two Sermons.

On the Queen's Accession Day.

Of Subjection to the Higher Powers.

The Unhappiness of Absolute Monarchy.

St. Paul's Behaviour to the Civil Magistrate.

Of the Extremes of Implicit Faith and Infidelity. In Four Sermons.

The Delusion of Protestants.

The Restoration made a Blessing.

The Nature and Duty of a Public Spirit.

The Nature of the Kingdom of Christ.

At the Funeral of Mrs. Howland.

On Jan. 30, before the House of Lords.

To which are added,

Six SERMONS upon Public Occasions,

Never before PRINTED.

The Nature and Duty of Moderation.

Of God's Dealings with Sinful Nations.

The Duty of Praying for Governors.

Of the Government of God's Providence.

The Mischief of intestine Quarrels.

The Consideration of our Latter End.

By BENJAMIN, Lord Bishop of *Winchester*.

LONDON,

Printed for JOHN and PAUL KNAPTON, at the
Crown in Ludgate-Street. MDCCCLIV.

P R E F A C E

short Account of the Author's life
and now publishing in this Order of
Time in which this was composed

will not I hope be thought impudent
The Author of this work is not to be
described "Christian" in the year 1800, where I
then officiated for Mr. Mayhew, the author
of the first Part, had not his Master in power
Christian-Germany to the French
bound by the bond of a man in the same
which had led: And now hereinafter
to view that this Author of Germany
not to be confounded with the German
Author

The Author's situation was peculiar in the German
of 1793. He had no income, but of Order
and of the Town Wurz 8, 1200 £ a year
I thought it my Duty to take this first Opportunity
which will my countrymen prefer to continuing
saying the Author of past Day. The following
of it was certainly owing to the severe Redium
of some of the Chief Patriotes, who were
it. When it happened, I was much surprised in a
Parliament for after a long struggle to well of by
a few days preceding to return to a Friend
on whom put by a private Letter to a Friend

P R E F A C E.

A Short Account of the *following Sermons*, now published in the Order of Time in which they were *preached*, will not, I hope, be thought improper.

The *Two first* of them were preached at St. Swithin's Church, in the Year 1702, where I then officiated for Mr. Hodges, the worthy Rector of that Parish, during his *Absence at Sea*, as *Chaplain-General of the Fleet*. They were occasioned by the great *Fury* in *Party-matters*, which *then raged*: And were honestly designed to shew, that the *Violences* of *Christians* ought not to be charged upon the *Christian Religion* itself.

The *Third Sermon* was *preached* at the Church of St. Peter's Poor, on the *Accession-day of Queen ANNE* to the Throne, *Mar. 8, 1704-5*, when I thought it my Duty to take that first Opportunity, after my coming thither, of declaring against the *Abuses* of that Day. The printing of it was entirely owing to the earnest Request of some of the Chief Parishioners, who heard it. When it appeared, I was much abused in a Pamphlet, for what *They* thought so well of, by a *then* neighbouring *Clergyman*, to whom I gave no *Answer* but by a private Letter to a Friend of His.

The Fourth is, *That Sermon about Magistrates and Subjects*, preached at St. Laurence's, on Sept. 29, 1705; which was followed by a long *Controversy*, upon the Subject of it. I was called to it by the accidental Mention of Me, by a Friend, to Sir *Owen Buckingham*, then *Lord Mayor*, with whom I had not Myself the least Acquaintance. The *Reader* has heard, if not *read*, enough of this long ago. I shall say no more of it in this Place, than That, from the Date of this Sermon, near *Fifty Years* ago, a Torrent of *angry Zeal* began to pour out itself upon Me, which, tho' *for the present* indeed very disagreeable; yet, opened a Way to such *Explications* of the Doctrine of it, and *Reasonings* about it, as have produced What, at the End, makes Me not to repent of having preached it.

The Fifth was preached at the *Affizes*, in March, 1707-8, at *Hertford*, at the Request of the *High Sheriff*, Sir *Richard Houblon*. The Subjects of it, *The Happiness of the present Establishment, and The Unhappiness of Absolute Monarchy*, were pointed out to Me, too strongly to be neglected, by the public Writings of that Time; particularly Those of *Mrs. Lessly*, then much celebrated by Many.

The Sixth was preached at the same Place, at the Summer *Affizes* in 1708, at the Request of the same Gentleman. The Subject is, *St. Paul's*

P R E F A C E.

Paul's Behaviour to the Civil Magistrate : which was chosen by *Me*, on account of many *Passages*, relating to that *Apostle*, in the *Political Controversies* in those Days very warmly handled ; and therefore *not unseasonable*.

The *Four* next Sermons, about the *Duty of Enquiry*, and the *Extremes of Implicit Faith*, and *Infidelity*, were preached at my *Parish Church*, in the Year 1712, on occasion of the many *Writings* published about that Time, which seemed, on one hand, to attack the *Christian Religion* itself ; and, on the other, to discourage a *Free Examination* of it.

The *Eleventh*, called *The present Delusion of Many, &c.* was preached at *St. Peter's Poor*, *Nov. 5, 1715*, and was occasioned by the *Rebellion* then on foot ; and the unaccountable *Conduct* of *many Protestants*, with relation to it, which sufficiently justified the *Title* given to the *Sermon*, when it was, at the *Desire* of *Many*, immediately printed.

The *Twelfth* was preached on *May 29, 1716*, at *St. James's Chapel*, at the *Request* of the then *Lord Almoner*, to whose *Care* the *Sermon* of that *Day* belongs. All that I shall say of it is, That the *Subject* of it, *viz.* The *Restoration made a Blessing by the Protestant Succession*, which had then just taken *Place* ; must be allowed to be as *pertinent* to the *Day*, as Any that could possibly have been thought of.

P R E F A C E.

The Thirteenth was preached to the Society of the Gentlemen of *Wales*, March 1, 1716. The Subject of it, *The Nature and Duty of a Public Spirit*, I thought particularly of Importance at that Time; and, I can truly say, was chosen without the least Thought of reflecting on any One Man, or Set of Men, more than Another; but entirely with a View to the *Duty of All* equally, to have a Sacred Regard to the Good of the Whole, and to sacrifice All their Passions to *That*.

The Fourteenth is the *Sermon* concerning *the Nature of the Kingdom of Christ*, which is known too well, by the many and public *Debates* occasioned by it, to need any word about it here. At whose Request it was commanded to be published, I know not. But I know, that it was not, either directly or indirectly, from any Desire of mine.

The Fifteenth was preached at the *Funeral* of an Excellent Lady, *Mrs Howland*; and designed, as all such Discourses ought to be, for the Use and Service of All *Christians*. But here I cannot but think it a Due, in point of Gratitude, to Her Memory, publickly to acknowledge this Singular Obligation to Her, That, in the Year 1710, when *Fury* seemed to be let loose, and to distinguish *Me* particularly; She Herself, unasked, unapplied to; without my having ever seen Her, or been seen by

Her ; chose, by presenting Me to the *Rectory* of *Stretham*, then just vacant, to shew, in her own Expression, *That she was neither ashamed, nor afraid*, to give Me that public Mark of her *Regard*, at that Critical Time.

The *Sixteenth* was preached on the *Anniversary Fast-day*, on account of the *Martyrdom* of King *Charles I*, and published by Order of the *House of LORDS*. It was not calculated to provoke, but to appease, the Passions of Men. And, as far as publickly appeared, It was received without any Marks of much Displeasure against it.

Of the *Six* additional Sermons, never before published, I need say no more, than that the *Two* first were preached at *St. Swithin's*, and the other *Four* at *St. Peter's Poor*, upon Days appointed for public *Fasts* or *Thanksgivings* : And that they are chiefly upon the *Subjects* of Universal Amendment of our Lives ; Good Temper, *Union*, *Love*, and *mutual Charity*, at Home : All, as *Practical* and *Useful*, as I could make Them ; and equally applicable to All *Men* and *Christians*, in the Nation.

If Any shall judge, from some Discourses in this Volume, That I used to entertain my Parishioners, in my *Sunday-Discourses*, with *Political*, or *Controversial*, Points, they will be as much *mistaken*, as many others were heretofore *disappointed*, who came to hear me,

with the same Notion. The *Sermons* on the *Terms of Acceptance*, printed long ago, may best shew, in how *plain*, and how *practical*, a Manner, I endeavoured to instruct Those in whom I was most nearly concerned.

The only *Inferences* in my own Favor, which I wish to be drawn from what is now published, are, That I never omitted any One public Opportunity, in proper Time and Place, of defending and strengthening the true and only *Foundation* of all our *Civil* and *Religious Liberties*, when it was every Day most zealously attacked ; and of doing all in my Power, that All the *Subjects* of this *Government*, and this *Royal Family*, should understand, and approve of, those *Principles*, upon which alone their Happiness is fixed ; and *without which*, it could never have been rightfully Established, and must in Time fall to the Ground : And also, That I was as ready, whenever Occasion was offered, by the Writings and Attacks of *Unbelievers*, and by the absurd *Representations* of *Others*, to defend a Religion, most amiable in all its Precepts, and most beneficial to *Human Society*, in the only Way proper ; by shewing it, in it's native Light, with which it shines in the *New Testament* itself, free from all the *False Paint* with which *Some*, or the undeserved *Dirt* with which *Others*, have covered it.

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I came not to send Peace, but a Sword.*

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known, even thou, at least in this thy Day,
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now they are hid from thine Eyes.* pag. 369.

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&c.

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that They would consider their latter End!*

pag. 454.

*In the P R E S S,
and will soon be Published,*

T W E N T Y S E R M O N S

Never before P R I N T E D.

The first Nine of them Preach'd before the KING in *Lent*.

By B E N J A M I N, Lord Bishop of *Winchester*.

Concerning the Divisions, and Cruelties, of
which the Christian Religion hath been made
the Occasion.

S E R M O N I.

Preached at St. Swithin's Church, in 1702.

St. MATTHEW x. 34.

*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth:
I came not to send peace, but a sword.*

Or, as it is in St. LUKE, Chap. xii. 51.

*Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth?
I tell you, Nay, but rather Division.*

THE full meaning of these Words, S E R M.
(spoken by our *Lord* to his *Apostles*, I.
when he was giving them Commission
to preach his Religion to the World) we
shall find to be this; if we consider the fore-
going, and following Verses. “ You may
“ imagine, perhaps, that the Excellence of
“ my Religion, and the Evidence that accom-
“ panies it, will effectually recommend it to
“ the Understanding, and the Affections of
“ Mankind; that the Humility, and Meek-

SE R M. " nefs, which it commands, will influence
I. " the World; and that such an Institution
~~~~ " as this will breath Peace, and an univer-  
" sal Calmness, into the Minds of Men. But  
" it will not be so. How excellent soever  
" it is in it self; how much Evidence soever  
" accompanies it; it will not be received as  
" you would expect: nor will it effectually  
" contribute to the Peace and Quiet of the  
" World; though it tends very much in its  
" own Nature to do so. Nay, This very  
" Religion, which I came into the World to  
" plant and propagate, (I foresee, and fore-  
" warn you of it,) will be made the Occa-  
" sion, and prove the Cause, of much Divi-  
" sion and Strife; of the strongest Passions,  
" Hatreds, and Animosities; nay, of the ut-  
" most Pitch of Malice and Persecution;  
" and of the greatest Barbarities, and Cruel-  
" ties: and this, amongst Men of the same  
" Nation, of the same Blood, of the same  
" Family; amongst Men who have the Ties  
" of Nature, Friendship, Alliance, Interest,  
" to make them good, kind, and beneficent,  
" to one another. *Think not that I am come*  
" *to send Peace on earth*, that is, Think not  
" that the Consequence of my coming into  
" the World, and preaching a new Religion  
" in it, will be this, that Men will sincerely

“ embrace it; or that it will tame the Passi- S E R M.  
“ ons of those who shall pretend to embrace I.  
“ it; or that the World will follow the Pre-  
“ cepts of Humanity and good Nature, laid  
“ down in it. No, *I came not to send Peace,*  
“ *but a Sword*, that is, The consequence of  
“ my coming into the World, and promul-  
“ gating this Religion, will not be *Peace on*  
“ *Earth, and Good-will amongst Men*: but this  
“ very Religion, this holy and peaceable In-  
“ stitution, will (through the Perverseness of  
“ Mankind) be often made a Cover and  
“ Pretence for the greatest Barbarities; and  
“ often prove the Occasion of Disorder, and  
“ Passion, and Malice, and Violence, and of  
“ all the Evils you can imagine.”

We must observe, that our *Lord*, in the *Text*, doth not speak of his Design in coming into the World: for it is very plain that He came with design to send Peace and good Nature upon Earth; and to plant the noblest and most extensive Charity in the Hearts of Men. But he speaks of a most unhappy Consequence of his appearing, and instituting his Religion: that it should be turned, by the Contrivances of the Wicked part of God's Creatures, to very bad Purposes, and ill Uses; to the Disturbance of that World, which it was designed to com-

SERM. pose and make happy. And because much  
 I. of this hath been seen in all Ages, and all  
 Nations, in which the Sound of the *Gospel*  
 hath been heard; and a great deal of it is  
 still to be seen in our own Age and Nation; and  
 because many have been offended at  
 Christ, and his Doctrine, on this unhappy  
 Account, and have blamed Christianity for  
 the sake of this, which it hath unwillingly  
 been the Occasion of: therefore, it may be  
 proper and useful to make some Observations  
 upon this Subject. And what I design upon  
 it, is,

I. To observe the Truth of what was here  
 predicted by our Lord: that *Christianity* hath  
 been made the Occasion of much Disturbance;  
 and of many fatal Divisions, Hatreds, and  
 Persecutions, in the World.

II. To vindicate *Christianity* from the  
 Guilt and Blame of this Unhappiness.

III. To consider whence it hath proceeded.

IV. To make some proper Observations,  
 and draw some useful Inferences, from what  
 I shall have said upon this Subject.

I. I shall observe the Truth of what is here  
 predicted by our Lord: that the *Christian  
 Religion* hath been made the Occasion of  
 much Disturbance; of many sad Divisions,  
 Hatreds, and Persecutions in the World.

It is, indeed, a very moving and uneasy <sup>S E R M.</sup> Consideration, that, from the time of its <sup>I.</sup> first Appearance to this very Day, such an use hath been made of it, or of something or other supposed to belong to it, as hath tempted some to think that the Mischief it hath given Rise to, in the World, is not counter-vailed by all the Good it hath hitherto brought forth. And there needs but a very little Knowledge in the History of former Times, or the Transactions of these later Ages, to make one wish that there were much less reason to think so, than there appears to be.

What our *Saviour* chiefly had an Eye to, in the *Text*, was, probably that Persecution; and those Instances of Malice; which He saw it would occasion in the World, at its first appearance: that Hatred of *Christians* it would produce in the Breasts of *Unbelievers*; and those Storms of Persecution, which the Profession of it would raise against them. But, as He could not likewise be ignorant of those Hatreds and Animosities it would, in after Ages, raise amongst *Christians* themselves, against one another; to the disturbing, and ruining their common Peace and Quiet: so, He did not (we may be sure) exclude these;

## 6      *Of the Divisions, and Cruelties,*

SERM. but had an Eye to them all, in the Words  
I. of the *Text.*

When *Christianity* first appeared, and first was preached; the Prejudices and Passions of Men ran high against it: as it was a Contradiction to their received Ways of Worship; to their former and settled Principles; to the Dictates and Practices of their Forefathers; and to their own indulged Lusts, and evil Habits. And so the very Profession of it, much more the bold Preaching of it, allarmmed all Mankind against the Men who professed and preached it. They were hated by their nearest Relations; they were exposed to the greatest Evils in Life: and they were persecuted even to Death: All Countries were disturbed at them; and all Princes, and Magistrates made it their Busines to extirpate them. This was their Case almost constantly, till their Numbers increased; till *Christianity* became the Established Religion of whole Nations; and Princes became the Temporal Patrons of the Church. And thus did this Religion which *Jesus* came to plant in the World, give an Allarm to the Kingdoms of it: and was made the Handle to unspeakable Disquiet and Disturbance, Malice and Persecution, in it.

But when it came to be the settled Religion

gion; to have the Approbation, and Countenance of Princes; and to enjoy the favourable Look of the great Men of this World: what a glorious Scene would any one expect, who seriously looks into the Design, Nature, and Precepts of it? What a Scene of Calmness and Serenity of Mind; of Mortification, and Conquest of those Passions and Lusts, from whence proceeds all the Mischief in the World? What a Scene of Love and Beneficence to one another; of Joy and Delight in one another's Happiness; of Openness and Freedom; of Sincerity and Kindness; of Humility, Condescension, Humanity, and Meekness? What could Any one expect, who searcheth into the Gospel, more than the Humours and Actions of Mankind, but that Peace and Holiness should have kissed each other; that Contentment and Happiness should have flourished in the Earth; that all that could contribute to the Quiet and Satisfaction of the World, should from this Time have abounded in it?

Would you think, That, as soon as the Christians had Rest from the World about them, their Passions ran as high against one another as the Passions of the unbelieving World had done against *them* before? Would you imagine that they turned from suffering

SER.M. gloriously, to biting and devouring; to hating and condemning one another? That their strongest and most avowed Hatreds, their most fatal Divisions and Animosities, took their Rise from, and had their Foundation in, some Point of Religion, some Point of Faith, or Worship? And that they were often more concerned for some insignificant Matter, or some Point of Speculation, that the Gospel had not so absolutely determined, as to leave no room for Diversity of Opinions; That they were too often, I say, much more zealous to defend, or oppose, *These*, than to preserve the Obligation, and secure the Practice, of the weightier Matters of the Gospel? Yet thus it was: and thus it hath been ever since, to that Degree, that it is now hardly a Question whether more Unkindness and Inhumanity, more Malice and Hatred, more Violence and Barbarity, have been shewn by Heathens and Infidels towards *Christians* for the sake of their Religion; than have been shewn by *Christians* towards one another, on the score of some Religious Differences.

The contending with the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of Truth, and Meekness, for the Purity of Faith and Worship once delivered to the Saints, was truly commendable and praiseworthy. This sort of *Contention* for

the *Gospel*, in the Spirit of the *Gospel*, hath s E R M. ever tended to the increasing of Charity, as I. well as to the manifesting of Truth. But a *false Zeal* quickly devoured it, and took its place: and very soon prompted Men of ill Tempers, and worldly Designs, to make a greater Distinction amongst *Christians*, than need; to stigmatize honester Men than themselves with hard Names, and odious Appellations: and then, to treat them contumeliously, and as Persons unfit to be dealt with in the Ways of Humanity, and Candour. And, on the other side, this same Pretense gave occasion to Men of Parts and Passion, when they saw themselves likely to be oppressed, to strengthen themselves in their Opinions; to form Parties upon a Foundation distinct from that of the flourishing Party; to enter into close Designs and Combinations; and so to help forward the Disturbance and Disquiet of the Christian Church.

If we pass from these first Ages downwards; who can speak, or hear, of such things, as have been publickly transacted amongst *Christians*, on Religious Accounts, without a very sensible Commotion within? We may read it in Histories, and we may see it with our Eyes, that there is an immortal Hatred; an Uneasiness not ever likely to cease, between *Christians* of several Denominations. There are

S E R M. are *Inquisitions* and Torments designed, and  
I. made use of, by *Christians* against *Christians*,  
beyond the Example of former Ages; and be-  
yond the Cruelty of either Jewish or Heathen  
Persecutors. We have known Men tortured  
and persecuted; murthered and massacred;  
banished from their Possessions; deprived of  
their Estates; expelled their native Land; se-  
parated from their Children and Friends, or  
their Friends and Children torn by Violence  
from them; for the sake of Religion, and un-  
der pretence of doing Service to the *Church* of  
God, by extending and propagating the Faith  
and Worship of a particular Set of Men. And  
how exactly hath the Account of this Matter  
given by our *Saviour* been verified, in se-  
veral Countries, in these last Ages, as well as  
the first Times of the Gospel? *A man hath*  
*been at variance against his Father;* and the  
*Daughter against her Mother;* and the *Daughter*  
*in law against a Mother in law;* and a *Man's*  
*Foes have been those of his own Household,* as it fol-  
lows just after the *Text* in St. Matth. 35, 36.  
And as it is St. Luke, ch. xii. 52, 53. There  
*have been five in one House divided, three against*  
*two, and two against three.* *The Father divided*  
*against the Son, and the Son against the Father;*  
*the Mother against the Daughter, and the Daugh-*  
*ter against the Mother; the Mother in law against*  
*the*

*the Daughter in law, and the Daughter in law* SERM.  
*against her Mother in law.*

I.

We of this Nation, indeed, read, and hear at a distance, of greater Barbarities and Cruelties, than we have ourselves experienced, or seen with our Eyes: but yet we, amongst others, may help to prove the Truth of what I am now observing. For, What Heats, and Passions; what Unkindnesses, and Incivilities; what Hatreds and Variances; what Parties and Distinctions; nay, what Projects and Designs are there often seen amongst us, which, (if the Bottom of things be searched into,) owe their Original, or their Prosecution, to some real, or pretended, Difference in Religious Opinions, or Modes of Worship? Names are invented to distinguish some from others, and make them odious and suspected; and these Names are commonly taken from something that bears a relation to Religion, and the Worship of God: and the Church is too often hooked into Designs, in which it hath little to do; and Sacred Words are made to serve the Purposes of projecting Men. For this is laid down as certain, that tho' True Religion be little regarded, but rather trampled on, by the Generality of the World; yet the Pretences taken from thence are moving, and never fail to allarm the Multitude, and to forward a Design. Any Doctrine, manifestly framed

SERM. framed to serve a Purpose, can at any time easily be made the distinguishing Mark of a true *Christian*, or the true Church: and all that will not yield to the Truth of it, shall presently be branded with some Religious Nick-name or other. *Heretick*, and *Schismatick*, at the Head; and Multitudes of other opprobrious Names ranked under them; have all been taken from some Difference in the holding and professing the same Religion. And they have been used so freely, and after such a manner, as that they have often effectually contributed to the Destruction of Christian Charity; to the Overthrow of Peace and Concord; to the Ruine of many excellent Designs; and to the promoting many bad ones.

It is a shame to speak of these things: but it is too plain to be dissembled, that it hath fared thus with *Christianity* ever since it appeared; that it hath not only been made the Occasion of the bitterest Perfecutions from the Infidel Part of the World, but also of the bitterest Hatreds, and strongest Malice, and most irreconcileable Divisions, amongst *Christians* themselves: And these, at length, rooted in the Hearts of Men, to that Depth, and with that Firmness, that it appears next to impossible to extirpate them; or to restore the World to the Spirit of Meekness, and Quiet, and to the Temper of reasonable Creatures. *Next to impossible*, I say: For what can we think, when

when all the Attempts Almighty God hath seen <sup>s</sup> E R M. fit to make towards it, have hitherto proved ineffectual; when even his last Dispensation by the hands of his *Son*, sent from Heaven, hath been so far from healing the Wounds and Breaches in the Love and Regards of Men to one another, that it hath been abused to the inflaming and widening them? When God himself *speaks to them of Peace*, and yet *they make themselves ready to battle*? When they have taken occasion from this last Tryal of his, designed to plant Peace and Unity in the Earth, to be the more quarrelsome, and the more incensed against one another? when they search into the Bowels of this very Revelation, and fetch Fuel out of this most peaceable Institution, to set themselves, and the World about them, in Flames: What small Hope, I say, can we have of the Restitution and Re-establishment of Quiet and Harmony in the Minds and Actions of Men; whilst they are ever finding something in Religion it self, to exasperate their Minds against one another; to make their Lives unquiet, and Society unharmonious?

The Prophets have invain described the Golden Age of their *Messiah*, and invain extolled his glorious and pacifick Reign; unless God himself interpose. *The Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb* (saith the Prophet *Isaiah*, ch. xi. 6, 7, 8, 9,) *and the Leopard shall lie down with the*

SERM. the Kid : and the Calf, and the young Lion, and  
I. the Fatling together, and a little Child shall lead  
them. And the Cow and the Bear shall feed,  
their young ones shall lie down together : and the  
Lion shall eat straw like the Ox. And the sucking  
Child shall play on the Hole of the Aspe, and  
the weaned Child shall put his Hand on the Cocka-  
trice Den. They shall not hurt, nor destroy in  
all my holy Mountain : for the Earth shall be full  
of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters  
cover the Sea.

If this be a Description which relates to the Reign of *Christ*, and to the Glories of his Kingdom, when it should be set up in this World; we must with grief remark, that either the *Prophet* speaks only with respect to the Nature and Tendency of *Christ's* Doctrine; that, if Men would heartily receive and practice it, a glorious Peace and Happiness would be diffused over the Earth: or else, that He prophecies of some happy Times, unknown yet, which future Ages are to be blessed with. For the Earth is, indeed, full of the Knowledge of the Lord, in this Sense, that the Profession of *Christianity* is very widely spread. There is Opportunity enough for Knowledge: but there hath been yet but little of this universal *Charity* seen, or felt, in the World. The Earth is full of the Knowledge of the Lord: and yet the Wolf dwelleth not with the Lamb; nor doth

doth the *Leopard* lie down with the *Kid*; nor doth the *Cow* and the *Bear* feed together; nor doth the sucking *Child* play upon the *Hole of the Aspe*; nor doth the weaned *Child* put his hand upon the *Cockatrice Den*; nor have these rapacious and terrible Creatures left off to hurt or destroy in God's holy mountain. Nor hath any thing of what was intended by this, come to pass: that is, Mens Tempers have not been universally tamed and subdued; but the Wild and Wicked are still wild and wicked, still bite and devour the Innocent; and still a War is carried on amongst Men.

Nay, for what appears, and for all those Advances that have been hitherto made towards a firm Union, and a sincere and universal Friendship amongst all Men; every one of these figurative Expressions of the *Prophet* may be literally fulfilled, before an universal Calmness reign through the Earth. And the *Wolf*, and the *Lion*, and the *Leopard*, and the *Bear*, may sooner enter into Terms of Reconciliation and Amity, with the milder Beasts, and with Mankind; than the passionate and violent, the hurtful and venomous, the cruel and malitious, Part of Mankind shall suffer themselves to be tamed and subdued into good Nature and Charity; or be bound up by any Rules of Quiet and Harmony. But tho' we see so little

Sign

S E R M. Sign of this hitherto ; yet we know that not a  
I. Tittle of all that is spoken shall fail.

In the mean while, that it may be no Objection against *Christianity* it self, and no matter of Scandal and Offence to us, that it hath proved the Occasion of so sharp Swords, and so much Division upon Earth ; it becomes us to enquire, as I proposed,

II. Whether the Gospel itself be not wholly free from all the Guilt of this great Unhappiness ; or whether it be possible, with the least Degree of Justice, to attribute this to the Doctrine, or Design, of *Jesus Christ* ; to the Nature or Tendency of any thing contained in *Christianity* A very few Words will suffice upon this Head. For let any Person, of never so little Capacity, look into the Account of our Saviour's Life, his Actions and his Words, recorded in the *Gospels* ; or into the Sermons, and Epistles, and Behaviour of his Apostles ; and see if they find, through the whole, any the least Encouragement given, either by Example or Precept, to any, even the lowest, Degree of that Temper of Mind, or Manner of Deportment, which doth so much as border upon ill Nature, or cruel Usage of our Fellow-Creatures. Did not our Lord himself condescend to all the Offices of Love and Beneficence to all the World of Sinners about him ? Do not all his Precepts, which

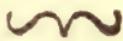
which respect human Society, manifestly tend ~~S E R M.~~  
to the Peace and Quiet of it? And would they not  
effectually procure and establish it, were they  
thoroughly attended to, and universally practised?  
Doth not He command, upon pain of God's eter-  
nal Displeasure against those who neglect it, the  
Practise of all the peaceable and quiet Virtues;  
and forbid the harbouring the very Thoughts  
and Surmises, that may possibly tend to break  
in upon the Happiness of the World about us?  
Meekness, Humility, Condescension, For-  
bearance, Forgiveness, Tenderness, and the  
like: are they not indispensably enjoined? And  
the Vices contrary to these, Haughtiness,  
Pride, Revenge, Unmercifulness, Malice, and  
and Ill-will: are they not strictly forbidden;  
their Punishment declared to be certain,  
and intolerable? They are forbidden, in all  
Cases, and at all Times. Nothing can ever  
justify them: nothing is supposed in the Gos-  
pel ever to excuse those who are guilty of  
them. Nay, Love, and Beneficence, and a  
Readiness to be reconciled to our greatest and  
most violent Enemies, are made the shining  
and distinguishing Characters of a true Chris-  
tian. And could He, who came to institute  
such a Religion, full of such Precepts, and  
constantly recommending such sort of Virtues  
above all others, be supposed to come on any  
other Design, but to compose the jarring Tem-  
pers,

SE R M. pers, and Actions of Men, into Concord and

I. Harmony? And can any one charge such a  
~~~~ Religion, that seems to be calculated in all its  
Parts, chiefly for the planting, maintaining,
and increasing, Peace and Love in the World;
can any one, I say, charge this Religion with
the Guilt of those Heats, and Dissensions,
which it hath been by Accident made the Oc-
casion of? No, It must be plain, beyond Con-
tradiction, to all who will look into it, that
Christianity itself hath not the least Part in this
Guilt: but that we must seek for the true
Source, and Foundation of all this Unhappi-
ness somewhere else. This is what I now de-
sign, *viz.*

III. To consider, whence this great Un-
happiness hath truly proceeded; and where
the Guilt of it is justly to be fixed. And

I. This Unhappiness manifestly proceeded,
in the first Ages of the Gospel, from the Pre-
judices and Passions of the unbelieving World,
both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. This I mention first, be-
cause the Disturbance and Disquiet that sprang
from this Original was first in order of Time,
commencing immediately with the Gospel it
self: and was what our Lord chiefly respected
in the *Text*; which was spoken to the Per-
sons who were themselves to be the first Pro-
pagators of his Religion, and the first Witnes-
ses to this fatal Consequence of it. A Scene of
Violence



Violence and Fury immediately attended the opening of the Gospel to the World. The Preachers, and Propagators of it were persecuted, beyond what had been known in the World before ; and all the sincere Professors of it hated by their very Friends and Relations, and pursued by all the Evils of this World, and all that is terrible to Flesh and Blood. Indeed this Persecution, and these Dissensions, had not happened in the World, if *Christianity* had not been preached to the Nations of it. But shall not *God* do his part to the reforming and amending the World ; because there are some in it that will make this very Attempt of his an Occasion of their growing worse ? Shall not *God* send a Divine Person into the World, to preach a pure and Holy Religion, full of *Charity, Humility, and Peace*, because some will make this an Opportunity of their increasing in Fierceness and Inhumanity ? Had the Christian Religion indeed, given the unbelieving World any reason to be so incensed against it, and so inhospitable to its Professors ; somewhat might be said in Vindication of their Practice ; and some Blame justly laid at the Door of *Christianity*. But wicked Men raised this terrible Scene of Persecution against it, not because they had no reason to receive it ; but because they would not. And they would not receive it, because it was against their Interests,

SER M. or their Lusts, or their Humours, to receive it. Not that it divested any of the Magistrates of this World of their lawful Authority; or dissolved the Obligation of Obedience in their Subjects. Not that it concerned it self with the Rights and Privileges of Kingdoms, and Civil Societies; or brake in upon the Government, or Discipline, of Nations. Not that it tended in its Nature to render Society disagreeable: to make Men ill-natured, or morose, or uncharitable, or unjust, or cruel, or hypocritical; or recommended any thing to Mankind contrary to the Peace and Quiet of the State. Nothing of this could be laid to its Charge by its greatest Adversaries. But the truth of the Case was this. They hated and derided it, because, if it had universally taken place, the Follies and Superstitions of their received Forms of Worship must have vanished; and the whole Fabric of their Forefathers Religion been shaken, and ruined. Let a Form of Worship be never so tedious with pompous Ceremonies; never so full of Fopperies, and ridiculous Circumstances; never so unworthy of reasonable Creatures to offer, or of God to receive; yet there is I know not what Fondness for it, riveted in the Minds and Affections of Men, if it descended down to them from their Forefathers, and can but plead Age and Prescription.

But perhaps Christianity, with the Evidence ~~SE R M.~~
that at first accompanied it, might have got ^{I.} over this Difficulty ; and have born down this ~~se~~ blind and ~~senfeleſs~~ Veneration of Antiquity. But this was not all it had to encounter. It opposed the Passions, and Lusts, and present worldly Interests of Men. The Jews saw, it condemned and opposed that Course of Sensuality and Covetousness they were generally engaged in ; and that it put an End to their Hopes of Temporal Prosperity, and Fleshly Pleasure, and Triumphs over their Enemies, under the Reign of their *Messiah*. The great Men of the World found it most opposite to the main Design of their Lives ; and irreconcileable with that Ambition, and Pride, and insatiable Love of Riches and Grandeur, which they had entertained, and could not part with. A very small Part of the World, as things went then, found any the least Comfort or Satisfaction in any of its Proposals. These were the Reasons why both *Jews* and *Gentiles* made it their Busines to crush it in its Infancy ; and to persecute, even to Death, the first Preachers and Professors of it : because they carried such Evidence along with them, in the Miracles they every where wrought, that they judged it must presently gain ground, if not thus heartily, and inhumanly resisted. This is a plain Account

22 *Of the Divisions, and Cruelties, &c.*

SER. how it came to pass, that the *Christian Religion* -

I. *on* was at first the Occasion of much Disturbance, and of bitter Persecutions, in the World: And whether this proceeded from any thing blameable in it self, or from the unreasonable Prejudices, and deep-rooted Vices, of the Unbelieving World, may be left to any one of Common Sense to judge.

S E R M O N

Concerning the Divisions, and Cruelties, of
which the Christian Religion hath been made
the Occasion.

S E R M O N II.

Preached at St. Swithin's Church, in 1702.

St. MATTHEW x. 34.

*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth:
I came not to send peace, but a sword.*

Or, as it is in St. LUKE, Chap. xii. 51.

*Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth?
I tell you, Nay, but rather Division.*

HAVING from these Words, *first*, made S E R M. some Observations upon the Matter *II.* of *Fact*, (here predicted by our Lord,) that *Christianity* hath been made the Occasion of many bitter Persecutions, fatal Divisions, and Hatreds, in the World: and having, in the *second* Place, vindicated *Christianity* it self from the Guilt and Blame of it; I proposed, *Thirdly*, To consider whence this Unhappiness hath truly proceeded; and where the Guilt of it is justly to be fixed. The *first* Observation was, that the bitter Persecutions, and Animosities

SERM. ties; occasioned at its first Appearance, proceeded entirely from the unreasonable Prejudices, and Lusts, and Passions, of the Unbelieving World.

Let us now turn our Thoughts from the Unbelieving to the Believing World; from the Men that persecuted *Christianity*, to the Men that have embraced, and do profess it. And, as we have before observed how much Hatred, and Division, how many Barbarities and Persecutions, amongst *Christians* themselves, have taken their Rise from Religion, and been founded on a Sacred Principle: so let us now consider whence this Unhappiness, amongst the Disciples of the same Master, hath proceeded, and from what Root it hath sprung.

2. Secondly, therefore, It is very plain that much of this Unhappiness hath proceeded from the Projects, and Designs; the Ambition, or Pride, or Covetousness, of the wicked part of the *Christian* World. *Christianity* never pretended to reform those, that are resolved to be Wicked: and no wonder that such as these (who have no Conscience, and no Principles of Religion,) when they have any of their own Contrivances to bring to effect, make use of the properest Means to accomplish them. They know that there is no better, nor more moving, Pretence, than the Care of Religion,

and the Church of God: and therefore, this S E R M. must be the Engine to set forward their Undertakings; and their unhallowed Lips must profane holy Words, that these holy Words may sanctify their unhallowed Actions. Thus, for instance, if the Bounds of Power are to be enlarged beyond right and just; if a Number of Men must be extirpated, banished, or depressed; something in Religion and **the Church** is often brought in, to colour **over** the vile Wickedness; to shelter it from Scandal, and ripen it for Success. If a Prince's favourable Smile be to be obtained for one Sort of Men, and his Displeasure to be kindled against another; it is often seen that nothing will more effectually do this, than some Consideration taken from their Difference in Opinion, or Practise, with relation to Religion, and the Worship of God.

This Method is frequently made use of by those who mean nothing more than the compassing their own Designs; the enlarging their own Credit and Interest; the ingratiating themselves with some whose Favour may turn to good account. And so the Peace of Human Society; the Quiet of the World; and the Satisfaction and Contentment of their Neighbours, are sacrificed, at all Adventures, to their own private Covetousness, or Ambition, or Pride, or Revenge, or some wicked Humour

or

SERM. or other. And because nothing better can be
II. pretended, Religion must be drawn into the
Quarrel: whilst these Men themselves, who
are the forwardest to hide themselves under
the Masque of something Holy, are of all o-
thers the most ready to reproach Religion it
self on this very Account; and the first to ob-
ject against it the many Disturbances, and Dis-
quiets, it hath occasioned in the World.

It is indeed, absurdly ridiculous, to hear
Men of notorious Looseness, Men of profane
and Atheistical Conversations, solicitous about
the Honour of *God*: and to see, how Men,
who have either never appeared at the Public
Worship, or never appeared there with De-
cency, can, upon Occasion, conceive a migh-
ty Concern for the Credit and Beauty of it;
how their Breasts can labour with the Heat of
a pious Zeal; and all their Designs and En-
deavours, on a sudden, be directed to the main-
taining and supporting the Church of *God*.
But this must be expected, we see plainly,
whilst there are wicked and designing Men,
under the Covert of the Christian Profession,
in this World. For they that have selfish,
and unchristian Designs; they that make no
scruple of cherishing Ambition, or Pride, or
Covetousness, or Revenge, will never make
any scruple of using Religion, and the Church,
as Instruments to promote the Designs such
Tempers

Tempers of Mind will put them upon. Add S E R M.
to this,

II.

3. *Thirdly*, That much of the Unhappiness we are now speaking of, may have proceeded from the Passions, and Weaknesses, and Imprudences, of sincere *Christians*; *Christians* that truly design well, and desire to promote the Honour of their Master, and their Religion. A good *Christian* will never indeed knowingly interpose in the promoting any Design, or advancing any Cause, to the Destruction of the Peace and Quiet of the *Christian* World: but a good *Christian* is not always secure, or out of danger of being imposed upon; when this Cause is varnished over, and painted before his Eyes, so as to appear quite another thing. Honest Men are often led by Knaves; and made the Tools of those, whom they would abhor, if they knew their Infides. They are often drawn in, to give Credit to a Cause, which, without their Presence, would not be tolerable: That so their Example may be urged in Defense of what wants better Arguments.

Christianity doth not make Men more discerning, or more learned in the Wisdom of this World, than it finds them. But yet, it neither commands, nor disposes, Men to be cheated, and imposed upon by every Pretense. It doth not instruct them to put on an Air

TERM. Air of Unconcernedness, or Indifference, in
what respects the Happiness of Mankind, or
the Society they belong to: Nor doth it educate them in Stupidity; or a Disregard of every thing but their own private Devotion and Piety. But, as it is far from sending them into Desarts, and Solitudes; into Places unfrequented by human Society; as it chiefly commends to them the Practise of those Virtues that adorn Conversation, and make the World about them happy: So it recommends to them somewhat of the Wisdom and Cunning of Serpents, as well as the Harmlessness and Innocence of Doves; lest the wicked and designing Part of the World should manage their Innocence and Simplicity to the Mischief of others, and the Ruin of Peace; and render their Harmlessness as fatal in its Influence upon the World, as if they were clothed with Barbarity, and Cruelty. It is no advantageous Part, therefore, of a good Man's Character, who is obliged to act in Society, that He sees with other Men's Eyes; or hears with other Men's Ears; or that he is, out of an affected Negligence, or fond Opinion of another's Abilities, or want of Resolution, led blindfold by others: because he may often be surprized into Things of very ill Consequence; and, when he little thinks of it, bring a Scandal upon that Religion he heartily loves, by an

an unwary helping to make it serve the Pur-
S E R M.
poses of Hatred, and Division. II.

What I have said under these two last Heads is, That there are wicked and designing Men in the World, who will, if it be possible, contrive their Designs so, as that Religion and the Church, shall be drawn in, to bear no inconsiderable Part in them; and that there are good and pious Men who will not be at the pains to examine their Designs thoroughly; or who cannot see through all the Colour they can lay upon them; or who are too easily cheated, and alarmed by their Pretenses: And that upon these Accounts it must so happen, that something in Religion will be too often made the Occasion of Disorder, and Uncharitableness, and Dissensions, and Persecutions, in the World of *Christians*.

4. But, *Fourthly*, Much of this Unhappiness hath proceeded from Mens not being contented with the Simplicity of *Christianity*, as it is to be found in the Gospels; from their making new *Creeds*; their adding new Articles of Faith to those laid down in the New ^{and} Testament; and laying new Impositions upon the rest of *Christians*, unknown to Christ and his Apostles. This I may safely affirm, that had *Christians* been always content with a mutual Agreement in the fundamental Doctrines of their Religion, as they lie in the *Gospel* it self;

SERM. self; and the indispensable Obligation of the
11. Practice of all the Duties commanded in it;
much of this fatal Consequence of it might have
been hindred; and very much of the Scandal
redounding from it, have been prevented. But
there hath ever been an Itch, in some or other
of Power and Authority, to alter the Terms
of Love and Concord settled by *Christ*; by
framing some new Character, and some fresh
Note of Distinction, among *Christians*: And
this hath ever begot Opposition; and Contro-
versies managed (on all sides) with Aggravations
and Provocations; and this hath brought forth
Variances, and Passion, and Hatred, in the
Breasts of those who are sure to be condemned
by their own Law, for want of Love and
Charity. And it ever so happens, as it hath
been manifested by constant Experience, that
more Violence, (which hath now for many
Ages passed for *Zeal*, That more Violence,
I say,) is shewn for these Additions, and for
these lesser, and undetermined Matters, in which
the Difference lies, than for the most fundamen-
tal Points of Faith, or the most necessary Points
of Practise. In the Practical Duties, especi-
ally, Men seem easy enough: and would fain
have it thought that the vilest, and most
enormous Crimes are more tolerable in them-
selves; and more inoffensive and harmless to
public

public Society; than a Difference in the least S E R M. of their Additions. *Methodus ad* *litteras* *II.*

II.

The greatest (I would to God I could say the *only*) Instances of this, are to be seen where the *Romish Religion* is spread. Ask one of that Religion, why so much Barbarity and Inhumanity is exercised; and an eternal War sworn against some sort of *Christians*? Why are they hated, tormented, banished, imprisoned, and put to Death? Do they not believe in God the Father Almighty, and in *Jesus Christ*? Do they not profess it to be their Faith, that there is but one God; that this God sent his Son *Jesus Christ* into the World to save Sinners; that He lived and died, and arose again and ascended up into Heaven to this Purpose? And that He will come again to judge the World; and that there is a future State of Rewards and Punishments? Or, are they wicked and debauched, immoral and vicious to that degree, that you fear the Vengeance of Heaven will fall on you, if you do not shew your Detestation of them? What Answer will you receive from him? There are few of them that would blush to tell you: (and yet who could do it without blushing?) "These are not the Things we so much concern ourselves about. These Persons you speak of, believe all this and more; and their Conversations may perhaps be regular and exact. But

SERM. " this is not enough. They do not believe the
II. " Change of the Elements into *Christ's* natu-
ral Body and Blood in the Eucharist.
" They do not hold themselves obliged to be-
" lieve whatever the Church shall recommend
" to them. They do not believe the Pope,
" or General Councils, infallible. They hold
" not the State of Purgatory. They will not
" invoke Saints and Angels: Or pray for the
" Dead. And therefore they are thus used."

Now these, and the like, are their own In-
ventions, and Additions to the Law of *Christ*:
and yet these Articles are the Standard of their
Love, or Hatred; and always determine their
Behaviour to other *Christians*, whether it shall
be human or inhuman, civil or barbarous.

But we must not be so partial to ourselves,
as to confine this Observation to that Church;
or to such Additions, or Points not essential, as
have been determined by it. I fear, it will be
found, that too many who profess to have re-
formed from that *Church*, still retain too much
of the Spirit of it; and too often make their
own Systems and Notions the Measure of their
Affections; and confine their cordial Love,
and Christian Charity, within the Bounds of
their own Creed, or Manner of Worship.
It is certainly true, that there have not been
greater Hatreds, or more unchristian Malice,
amongst *Christians*, than what have sprung
from

from this Root: And therefore, this unhappy ~~SERM.~~
Consequence of *Christianity* must be charged, ~~II.~~
in great Part, upon those *Christians*, who, ~~III.~~
not being content with the Simplicity of *Christianity*, as they found it in the *Gospel*, have
been perpetually making Additions to it, according to their own various Opinions, or
Designs.

5. *Fifthly*, Another Consideration near akin to this, is, that this Unhappiness amongst *Christians* hath chiefly proceeded from Men's mistaking the Nature, and main Design, of *Christianity*. Did Men but understand and consider that it was not the great Design of the Christian Religion to make all the World of one Opinion, in Things of little Moment: but that it was reveled from Heaven, chiefly to restore the Worship of the *one Supreme God*, in *Spirit and in Truth*; and to teach Men to deny *Ungodliness and worldly Lusts*; and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this *World*; they could not act the Part, they so often do. Did Men but consider, that the great Branch of Christian Duty, is Love, and Good-nature, and Humanity; and the distinguishing Mark of a *Christian*, an universal Charity; they could not but own that *Jesus Christ* came to plant and propagate these in the *World*. And then, they would abhor the Thoughts of making any thing in his Institution an Engine

SERM. gine of Strife, and Malice, and Inhumanity.

II. Then, they would not think all Things law-
ful against those that differ from them; nor
themselves obliged to crush and ruine them.
Then, the Contention betwecn Men of vari-
ous Minds would not be, who should have
the Power of oppressing their Brethren: But
the Contest would be, who should Love
most; and who should give the most expressive
Demonstrations of an unconfined Good-nature,
and an unbounded Charity. But these, I fear,
are but Dreams and Wishes!

It would found something strange to say
that the chief Design of *Christianity* is too
plain to be understood, and too evident to be
seen: And yet it is true, that the very Plainness
of this makes it the less attended to. Such a Love
there is in Men to something not so easy to be
understood; nor of such Importance: and such a
readines to find out other Designs of *Christianity*,
more agreeable to their own worldly Projects!

Can any of all the fiery Zealots in the
World shew us any Design more worthy of
the Son of God's descending from Heaven,
than the planting of Love, and Peace, on Earth?
more beneficial to the whole Race of Man-
kind; more for the Ease and internal Quiet of
our own Breasts; or a better Preparative for
the calm and serene Joys of Heaven; for the
Fruition of that God who is Love, and of the
Company

Company of those blessed Spirits, who are ~~SE R M.~~
the Witnesses, and Ministers, of his Love? ii.
Can they shew us any Design more plainly re- ~~~
veled in the Gospel; or any one Duty there
laid upon us, to which this must at any time
give place? If they cannot, then nothing can
ever release us from our Obligation to Love, and
Charity; or ever excuse the least degree of
Hatred, and Malice, and Violence; much less
of Barbarity and Cruelty. Nay, how can it pos-
sibly be thought by any *Christians*, that a Re-
ligion which lays such Stress upon Peace,
and Love; which dwells so eternally upon them;
which was founded in Love, and so
manifestly designed for the propagating and
establishing Good-nature in the World: How
can it be imagined, that there is any thing in
this Religion, that can give them occasion to
hate, or disturb, or persecute, any of their
Brethren? Unless they can think that it self is
so framed as to destroy it's own Design; to
oppose its own main End, and Purpose; and
to dissolve the Obligation of it's own Precepts.
These things are inconsistent, and too absurd to
be fastened upon *Jesus Christ*, by any who be-
lieve him sent of God. And would Men seri-
ously attend to the Design of the Gospel, they
could not fix such Absurdities upon it: Reli-
gion would be free from the Scandal of being
the Occasion of Hatred, and Disturbance, and

S E R M. Persecution, amongst Men; and the World
II. would be free from the Trouble and Plague of
them; Society would be happy; and God
would be glorified in the universal Practice of
Love and Peace.

Having thus endeavoured to give some Account, by what Men, and by what Methods, *Christianity* hath been made the Occasion of Quarrels, and Hatred, and Persecutions, in the World; and by what Means it hath been too much verified, that *Christ came not to send Peace, but a Sword*: I shall now, as I proposed in the last Place,

IV. Make some proper Observations, and draw some useful Inferences, from what hath been said. And,

First, Since it is plain from what hath been before said, that *Christianity* hath been the Occasion of Disturbances, Hatreds, and Persecutions, in the World; not by means of any thing contained in itself naturally tending this way; but by Means of the Perverseness, and Weakness of Men, and particularly of *Christians* themselves: Let us learn to distinguish between *Christianity*, and *Christians*; and not blame the one, for the Faults of the other. Were there any thing in the Design or Doctrine of the Gospel, naturally tending to unlinge and confound the World; it ought in

in reason to lie under the Imputation. But it ~~S E R M.~~ ought not to suffer under such a Scandal, if it ~~II.~~ be it self wholly free from such a Tendency. ~~U~~ ~~U~~ Notwithstanding this, it hath fared with *Christianity*, as it hath done with many other Professions: The Faults of those who have professed it, have reflected Shame, and devolved an ill Name, upon it, whilst it utterly dis- countenances, and absolutely forbids, those very Faults.

Men take it usually very ill, in the Affairs of this World, that any Profession or Calling amongst them, should suffer Disgrace, and fall in the good Esteem of other Men, for the sake of the Crimes, and ill Behaviour, of some of those who pretend to belong it: And they always argue, that it is the most unjust thing in the World, it should do so, unless it can be shewn, that it does command, or encourage, any such Practices; much more, when it condemns, and threatens Punishment to them. And yet they scruple not to deal by the Christian Religion after the manner they think it hard their own Secular Professions should be dealt with; and draw up an heavy Accusation against *that*, made up of a long Catalogue of the Crimes of its Professors.

Far be such unreasonable Proceedings from all who pretend to judge reasonably. Blame not the *Christian Religion* for what it most unwillingly,

S E R M. willingly, and against its own Injunctions, is
II. forced to be the Cause of; but blame the Per-
verseness of those, who, wittingly, and wil-
lingly, oblige it to be an Instrument to their
Purposes. Inveigh not against a Religion,
which is framed to conquer Mens Passions :
But inveigh against the Passions of those, who
will not suffer it to conquer them ; but press
Religion itself into the Service, of them.
Say not, that *Christianity* is not good, and of
beneficial Influence upon the Happiness of the
World : But say, that Men will not suffer it to
shew its Power upon them ; that Men will not
bear to be, what That would have them to be.
Be not ready to be scandalized at the Gospel,
because it hath thus sent, *not Peace, but a
Sword upon the Earth* : But be offended at
those who have brought this Evil to pass,
solely for their own Worldly Interest ; in order
to promote their own wicked Ends, and to sat-
isfy their own private Views. *Wo be to the
World because of Offenses, for it must needs be that
Offenses come ; but wo to that Man by whom they
come.* It must needs be, that the Passions
and Wickedness of Men will bring forth Va-
riance, and Disturbance, in the World : And
this will reflect a Dishonour upon the Religion
itself, under which they hide themselves.
But *Wo* to those Men who are the proper
Cause of this Unhappiness to their Fellow-
Creatures ;

Creatures; and of this Objection against these R. M. Gospel.

II.

I shall only here add one Observation, that it cannot be a tolerable ground of Offense against Religion, that something in it hath been turned to evil Purposes, and to the Disquiet of Mankind; because this is really an Argument, that it is in itself good: It being certain, that the better any thing is, the more willing are designing Men to hide their main Designs under the Cover of it; and the more inclined to use it as an Instrument to make the World about them the more readily fall in with their Measures.

This leads me, *Secondly*, to observe from what hath been said, how much the best Things may be abused; and to what ill Purposes the Wickedness and Weakness of Men, can turn the most excellent Institutions of God himself. In his Dealings with Men, Almighty God doth not actuate their Wills, or Resolutions, with an irresistible Arm; but proposes to them sufficient Arguments to receive what he offers them, and sufficient Assistance to perform what he commands: Still leaving to them a Place for Reward, if they submit to him; or of Punishment, if they do not. Here we have an Instance (an almost incredible, and very surprizing Instance) of the strange Perverseness of human Nature, and the Ingrati-

SERM. tude of Men to the Love of God. He, in
11. Mercy, proposes a Revelation to them, per-
fectly qualified to make them easy here, as
well as happy hereafter. Some not only re-
ject it themselves, but hate, and persecute,
and extirpate, those who preach it, and propose
it to them. Others, indeed, receive it, and
profess it: But, instead of conforming their
Tempers and Lives, to its Precepts; and
studying the Advantage, and Happiness, of
the World they live in, they presently turn
their Thoughts upon what private Advantages
they can make of it; what account they can
make it turn to; what there is in it, for their
Ambition, or Covetousness, or Revenge, to
employ in their Service; what there is in it
proper for them to work with, in order to
raise themselves, and depress others.

Thus have the wicked Part of the World
turned into Poison, and Ruine, what was de-
signed for their Health, and Strength; and
converted into a common Plague, and Disturb-
ance, what was exactly qualified to establish,
and confirm, human Society in Quiet, and
Happiness. But whither at length will the
Perverseness of Men proceed, when so sacred,
and useful, a thing hath not been able to
withstand it? For what can be thought of,
that is more truly qualified for other, and
better Purposes; for the universal Interest, and

Peace,

Peace, of the World, than the Christian Religion ? What more worthy of God to reveal ; or of Man to receive, and practise ? And yet, ~~what~~ what hath been ever more abused ; or perverted to worse, and more detestable Purposes ? But this, as it shews us the perverse Tendency of human Nature, when it is once debauched by worldly Principles, and drawn aside from the Paths of strict Virtue : So it leads us,

Thirdly, to consider what an Account some Men have to make : and what a Punishment *They* have waiting for them, who are guilty of so unpardonable an Abuse of God's Mercy in the Dispensation of the Gospel. Invain do Those who are the proper Causes of these unhappy Consequences of the *Christian Religion*, think to lie hid, or to escape free, with all the private Advantages they procure to themselves. Invain doth the *Atheist*, who puts the Guise of Religion upon what He undertakes, flatter himself with the Hopes of Security, and Impunity. Invain do the Sceptics, and Irreligious Men, who colour over their Designs with something taken from *Christianity*, laugh inwardly at the Multitude, whom they have deceived with these Pretenses. Almighty God sees it all : And knows the unfaithful Turnings and Windings of their Hearts : And treasures up all, against the Day of Accounts. And then, what Punishment can we believe too great,

SERM. great, for such Hypocrisy, and such Crimes?

II. To them belongs the Guilt of greater Ingratitude, that can be expressed in Words; the Guilt of perverting an Institution from the Design of God, to the Purposes of the Devil; from the Purposes of Union and Quiet, to the Purposes of Division and Unhappiness. To them belongs the Guilt of scandalizing many against the Christian Religion: The Guilt of bringing a Disgrace upon it; and of recommending *that* to the Hatred and Aversion of many in the World, which, if it had not been for such professed *Christians*, might have made a lasting good Impression upon them, and have prevailed with them to the eternal Salvation of their Souls.

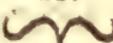
These Men indeed at present cannot be disturbed at the Thoughts of this: Because they can have no Sense of what they do not believe. And that they do not believe this, is plain from their Behaviour. For how can they pervert and abuse Religion to their own wicked Purposes; if they believe any thing of the Punishments it threatens, and the Terrors it propoies? But this Security, and false Peace, will not last for ever. Death will put a stop to all their Projects: And after Death comes the Judgment; the Judgment before an All-knowing and Almighty Judge; *One* that cannot be imposed upon, and cannot be resisted; and

and One, who will certainly punish them according to their Works. *They have their Reward* here, if their Pretenses take, and their ~~W~~ false Colours delude the World, for a while, at present: But the Scene will quickly change, from a State of Design and Hypocrify, into a State of that Misery, which hath been denounced, and will certainly be executed, upon *Hypocrites*. There are some sort of *Hypocrites*, who do some Service and Credit to *Religion*, if they be never discovered by Men: But these are a sort of *Hypocrites*, the Consequence of whose *Hypocrify* is as fatal to *Christianity*, as the most open and profligate Wickedness. For their *Hypocrify*, and Pretense to a regard to something in Religion, tends visibly to unhinge the World; and, in its Consequences, brings a perpetual Scandal upon the Religion they profess, by prostituting it to the Service of vile Lusts, and Passions; by procuring great Temporal Advantages to Themselves, and numberless Miseries to Others. Such as these must not expect the Punishment only of ordinary *Hypocrites*: But somewhat as Extraordinary in the Reward of their *Hypocrify*, as that hath been Extraordinary in its mischievous Influences upon the World, and its Difservice to Religion.

Fourthly, Since this is the Way of bad Men; and Religion, and the Church, are often

SE R M. ten made the Pretense for very bad Things: It
II. concerns others to be upon their Guard not to
be deceived, as these are continually upon their
watch to impose upon them. Next to the
not being guilty of this themselves, the great
Care of Men ought to be, that they be not led
away by those that are so; and so contribute
by their Carelessness, or Easiness of Temper,
to, what they would otherwise abhor, the
Scandal of Religion, and the Disquiet of the
Society they are related to. Why, indeed,
should it not be accounted a Duty, to be as
watchful to prevent such Mischiefs, as some
are to bring them to pass? To be as prepared
to fence against them, as some are always to
forward them? Or, why should *honest* Men
incur some Part of the Guilt of the *Wicked*,
by not thinking it worth their while either to
understand them rightly, or to oppose them
heartily?

Fifthly, and Lastly, Since the Guilt of those
who have an Hand in making any thing in Re-
ligion subservient to the Purposes of Dissen-
sion, Hatred, and Persecution, is so great: Let
us take care not to be of the Number of those
who do this, in the least Degree imaginable.
There hath been enough already done to veri-
fy this Prediction of our Lord's, that *He came
not to send Peace, but a Sword.* He will thank
us, if we will at length leave off to prove the

Truth of it by our Example. Enough of S E R M. Perfec-
tion, and Violence, and Hatred, hath II. been founded on Religion. Designing Men  have cheated the World long enough: And long enough hath the *Gospel* lain under the Scandal of the Vices of others; and of encouraging those Passions which it came to tame. It is time now for *Christians* to consider that their Busines is *Peace*; and their Religion *Love*: And that *Christianity* is sufficiently qualified to make them taste of Happiness, even here below, if they do not themselves hinder it. Let us remember this: And think, if we can be too careful to do our Parts towards the retrieving the Good name of Religion; and the restoring it to its primitive and original Design.

SERMON III.

Preached in the Parish Church of St. Peter
Poor, March 8, 1704-5.

The Anniversary of Thanksgiving for
the QUEEN's Accession to the Throne.

PSALM xcv. 2.

Let us come before his Presence with Thanksgiving.

SER M. **W**E are this Day called upon by Authority, to celebrate before God the Accession of our Gracious QUEEN to the Throne of these Kingdoms: A QUEEN, whose admirable Prudence and Conduct; whose tender Care of all Her Subjects, and hearty Concern for their common Interest, have made Her the Delight of Her People, and given us abundant Reason to come before the Presence of God with Thanksgiving. And that we may pursue the true Design of this Day's Solemnity, without the Mixture of the least

III.

least Indecency, or of any thing that may be S E R M. displeasing to Almighty God ; I design to offer III. some Considerations, which seem to me ~~to~~ proper, and expedient for the end of our present *Assembly* : That we may neither shew our selves unthankful for the Blessing we truly enjoy under the happy Government of such a *Princess* ; nor express our Thankfulness for them after an improper, or unbecoming manner. It would be base and unworthy in us, not to endeavour to make ourselves sensible of our own Happiness, in order to our offering the Thanks that are due to Almighty God, and to our paying the Acknowledgments, and Returns we owe to that Wisdom which now presides and governs in this Nation : And on the other hand, it would be much more unworthy of Men, and of *Christians*, to express our Resentments of the Blessings of this Day, after such a manner as is not agreeable to a true Sense of them, or doth not suit with the Solemnity of our Appearance before God. It being my Design, therefore, to guard against both these Evils, I beg leave to mention to you as well the improper, as proper ways of celebrating this Day ; that so we may take care to avoid the *One*, and chuse only the *Other*. And,

I. I shall

S E R M.**III.**

I. I shall but just put you in mind, in general, that all manner of Vice, and Wickedness, is utterly inconsistent with such Solemnities ; and that the smallest degrees of Intemperance, Extravagance, and Debauchery, little become such a Day as this. It is an unpardonable Contradiction, to express our Gratitude to Almighty God by forgetting his Laws, and violating his Commandments ; and an unaccountable Method of *Thanksgiving*, to affront and disobey our great *Benefactor* : And yet it is but too observable, especially on such *Festivals* as relate to the *Civil Estate* of the *Kingdom*, that many think they cannot appear joyful enough without casting off all regard to Sobriety, and letting loose the Reins to Intemperance. But all such Joy as disdains the Bounds of Religion, and Virtue, degenerates into Madness : And whilst it seems to express a Sense of God's Favours, and a Love to our Country, it is, in Truth, the greatest Demonstration of our Insensibility of the one, and our Enmity to the other ; putting a stop to the gracious Design of future Mercies, and helping only to treasure up Wrath against the Day of Wrath. There being, therefore, nothing so incongruous and absurd, as to express a Thankfulness to God by wicked Actions ; and a Love to our Country, by contributing to the Debauchery, and

Ruine

Ruine, of it ; let all such Behaviour as is contrary to the Rules of Reason, and the Laws of the Gospel, be far banished from all who truly rejoice before God. But,

II. With a more peculiar Relation to this Day, I cannot but observe, (and I hope without Offence to any) that it seems disagreeable to a true Sense of the Mercy of this Day, to celebrate the Accession of Her present *Majesty* to the Crown, with Reflections, and Satyr, upon the Memory of Her *Royal Predecessor*. It is the only Thing that casts a Shadow over the Brightness of this Day, that We could not enjoy an Excellent *Princess*, without being deprived of an Excellent *Prince*; that the same Day, which began the Happy Reign of our great, and good, *QUEEN*, put a Period to the useful, and invaluable, Life of a great, and good, *KING*; that the same Hour which demanded Acclamations of Joy for the one, demanded Tears of Piety and Gratitude, for the other. Never was there a greater, and more dubious, Contest known between *Grief* and *Joy*, than on this Day: For never was there a Reign ended of more beneficial Influence upon these Nations, than that which this Day ended; and never was there a Reign begun, from which we could promise our Selves a greater Progress towards Happiness, than we

S E R M. have already experienced from that which this
III. Day began. If therefore, it were on any Ac-
count allowable to contaminate a Day of Joy
with any Marks of Grief; surely it might be
allowed to shed a Tear upon the Memory of a
Prince, to whom, under God, we owe the
Enjoyment of all we possess. And methinks,
such a Tribute to his Name might be thought
even an Honour paid to this *Day*, on which
We should not now be Celebrating the Ac-
cession of an Excellent QUEEN to the Throne,
had not He first sustained the Shock of our
Enemies, and settled us upon that Foundation,
which we now think of with so much Plea-
sure, and Security. Especially, since the car-
rying our Thoughts backward, can only serve
to raise our *Thankfulness* to Almighty God,
that, after He had deprived us of a Life, on
which the Fate of *Europe* seemed, in human
Appearance, to depend, He was pleased to
seat upon the same *Throne* a *Princess* so wise;
so skilled in all the Rules of good Govern-
ment; and so regardful of the true Interest of
Her People, that *Her* Reign hath hitherto
seemed only a glorious Continuance of the for-
mer.

Nothing indeed, can be more incongruous
to the Duty of this Day, than to persecute the
Memory; or to rake into any supposed Mis-
takes, and Mismanagements; or to fix any
Blot

Blot upon the Reputation, of Him, by whom S E R M.
only it is, that this Day bears those Characters III.
of Joy it hath now put on. And methinks,
if nothing else; if neither Honour, nor Grati-
tude to our late KING; yet Respect, and Vene-
ration for our present QUEEN, if it be real,
should secure His Name from Reproaches,
who laid the Foundation of her Reign, and her
Glories. Her Throne is settled upon the same
Foundation, on which His was fixed: And
can it be a proper Method of exalting *Hers*
with Honour, to throw down *His* with In-
dignity? Upon Her Accession to the Crown,
She Her self styled Him, in an august Assem-
bly, *the great Support not only of these King-
doms, but of all Europe*: And can it become
Her Day to contradict that glorious Charac-
ter? Or can it be accounted an Honour to
Her, to deny the Truth of her own solemn
Words? And ever since She ascended the
Throne, it hath been her Glory to pursue the
Cause of her great *Predecessor*; to insist in the
Paths which he had troden before Her; and
to oppose the same common Adversary with
the same Zeal, and Concern. How injurious,
therefore, must it prove to the Glories of the
One, to depress, and lessen the Glories of the
Other? I would not willingly give leave to
too severe a Censure: But there is too much
Reason to fear that the same Persons, who

S E R M. can solemnize this Day with *Invectives* against
III. the late KING, may come in time to solemnize
it with the like *Invectives*, against the present
QUEEN; if She shall continue unmovingly to
pursue the same hated Maxims of Government,
and to speak too often, and too earnestly, of
Peace and *Moderation*.

But if such Persons think that the Glory of
so great, and good, a QUEEN cannot be raised
to a sufficient height, without depressing the
Glory of her *Predecessor*; this is, of all others,
the greatest Indignity they could offer to her
self, and to her Day. For it is one principal
Reason for our present *Thankfulness*, that our
Excellent Queen abounds in so many Graces,
and so many noble Accomplishments; is
adorned with so great a degree of Conduct,
and Wisdom; and appears so admirably fitted
for Government, that She will ever shine
illustriously by her own Light; that her na-
tive Excellencies will add a perpetual Grace to
her Name; and that She stands not in need
of any such poor, and inglorious, Artifices, to
endear her to her People, or to make her Sto-
ry full of Honour in future Ages. She pos-
sesseth what is sufficient to recommend Her to
the Affections of all her good Subjects; and
owes her Glories to her self, and not to the
Defects and Faults of Others.

But it is no great Wonder that so great an
Abuse

Abuse can be put upon this Day, since we find S E R M. that some have their Understandings so III. strangely turned, that they cannot imagine a Veneration for Her present *Majesty*, consistent with a Respect to the Memory of Her *Predecessor*. I speak this with relation to such amongst us, as are not content with professing themselves hearty Friends, and Well-wishers, to that *QUEEN* who began Her Reign on this Day; but are often insinuating, after some manner or other, that Her secret Enemies are many, and especially amongst those, who profess the highest Respect to the Memory of Her *Predecessor*. This seems to me so hard a Censure, and so little deserved, that I care not to speak as severely of it, as I justly might: But I must say, that I think it manifest, on the contrary, that Those who were truly *Friends* to the late *Government*, cannot be truly *Enemies* to this; and that Those, who were hearty Lovers of the late *KING*, can never, without renouncing, or contradicting, their Principles, hate, or revile a *QUEEN*, who succeeds Him in the same glorious Designs; who hath the same Regard to the Rights and Liberties of Her Subjects, and the same Zeal against the great Adversary of both. We know, many who help to spread this Evil Report of their *Brethren*, are publick, and professed, *Enemies* to the present happy *Establishment*. It is wonderful that

SE R M. They should think themselves of all others the
III. fittest Persons to give Information of *Friends*,
and *Enemies*, to a Government which they
cannot themselves wish well to. But it is much
more wonderful, that Any who study the Pre-
servation of the *Government*, and the Interest of
the present *Governor*, can join in a Censure,
which cannot but raise the strongest Jealousies
against Those who have not deserved them ;
and greatly increase those mutual Animosities,
which are already too violent amongst Us.
But I have suffered my self to be carried be-
yond my first Design, in Opposition to what
seems contrary to Decency, and Gratitude, and
to the Occasion of this Day. And I shall only
add, that all that I have now said hath proceed-
ed, not only from a great Regard to the Me-
mory of our late KING, which I am not asha-
med to profess : but from a profound Venera-
tion for our present *QUEEN*, whose Honour
appears to me deeply concerned in it.

III. Having taken Notice of the Abuses of
this Day, I come now to observe, that it is
one very proper part of our present Duty to
make ourselves sensible of the Mercy of God
to us in the Accession of our Excellent *QUEEN*
to the Crown ; lest we should seem to draw
near to him with our Lips, but to have our
Hearts, far from him, whilst we pretend to
commemorate so great a Blessing before him.

We need not doubt, but that, if our great, ~~SE R M.~~ and common, Adversary had been to wish ~~III.~~ ~~III.~~ what, of all Things, He could have thought most conducive to the compassing the Ends of his boundless Ambition; He would have wished a Period to the Life of our late KING, who had so long stood resolute against his constant Attempts upon the *Rights* and *Liberties* of *Europe*, and made it his whole Employment to prevent the Success of his *Mischief* as fast as He himself could contrive it. And we need not doubt but that, upon the Death of such a *Prince*, (so able, and so resolved, to oppose Him) He flattered Himself with a Train of uninterrupted Successes; and a Series of Future Conquests and Triumphs; and imagined all Things bowing their Necks to his Authority; and no Resistance but what He could despise, and easily break through. But Almighty God, who sees not as Man sees, nor judges as Man judges, quickly taught Him to think otherwise. By his good Providence our QUEEN was peaceably seated upon the Throne; inspired with the same Zeal against the common Enemy, that filled every Hour of the Life of Her *Predecessor*; and quickly began to shew such Signs of Prudence, and Wisdom, and Conduct, as could not but convince Him how vain, and groundless his Confidences were. Abroad, Affairs have been managed with that singular,

SE R M. and wonderful Prudence, which hath drawn
III. after it such an Instance of Success, as hath
been seldom known in History. At Home, lest the unhappy Temper of this Nation should
give too much Advantage to the *Enemy*, universal Love, and Peace, and mutual Benevolence, have been recommended, and cultivated. Great and signal Acts of Piety and Charity have been performed, to invite down the Blessing of Heaven: And we have been taught by the highest Example, our Duty, and our Interest. Upon all which Accounts certainly we have the greatest Reason to pay our hearty Acknowledgments to Almighty God, and to *come before his Presence with Thanksgiving*. For by his Providence Princes reign, He laid the first Foundation of all their Accomplishments, and all their Designs. He orders the Scene of Affairs so, as that all the Success and Happiness that follows is owing originally to his infinite Wisdom, and Goodness. If therefore, He hath been good to us after so extraordinary a manner; and disposed Things so, in this Critical Juncture, that we must all acknowledge, we want neither Conduct and Courage in our *Armies Abroad*, nor Wisdom and Temper in our *Counsels at Home*; let us be sensible of so great a Blessing as the Accession of a *QUEEN* to the Throne, who so gloriously maintains the Cause delivered down

to Her ; so wisely governs at Home, and so ~~SER M.~~
successfully wars Abroad.

III.

And it will increase our Sense of the Mercy of God towards us in her Accession to the Crown, to consider that happy Constitution, and Frame of Government, which is by this preserved, and confirmed, to Us. She is the first upon the Throne, since the Settlement of the *Succession* in the Protestant Line : and She hath demonstrated already to the whole World her Hatred of *Tyranny* and *Slavery*, and her tender Regard to *Liberty*. So that we may say, we owe to her Reign the Confirmation, and Establishment, of our happy Estate. Happy indeed, if we look Abroad, and compare it with the miserable Estate of such as are under no Law but *Arbitrary Will* ; and know not what it is truly to possess any Thing ; or so much as to enjoy the Worship and Religion they approve. We can have no proper Notion, at this distance, of what hath been suffered, throughout *Europe*, from the ungovernable *Excess of Power*, and the burning *Zeal of Popery*. When we felt in ourselves but the Approaches towards what is known in other Lands, there was hardly a Man to be found that did not disdain the unnatural Principles of a servile Obedience : Nay, many of Those who afterwards returned in their Hearts to *Egypt*, permitted Nature to have so much force

S E R M. force upon them, as that they invited Relief, and Assistance; and themselves laid the Scene of our Deliverance. And could we see what others at this Moment feel, under the Influences of *Ungoverned Power*, and *Bigotry*, we could not but retain a just Value for our own Happiness; and a just Sense of the Favour of God, in granting us a *QUEEN* as truly concerned for the *Rights*, and *Liberties*, and *Religion*, of her Subjects, as her Subjects themselves could wish. It is an invaluable Blessing, and above all the Grandeur, and Magnificence of *Arbitrary Power*, that we can dare to say, we enjoy any Thing, and have a Title to it; that we can demand it of any that lay violent Hands upon it, and can call for legal Redress of the Injuries of the greatest Persons amongst us. And it is an incomparable Happiness, that we enjoy the *Religion* we approve; that we can meet undisturbed for the Worship of God, and freely exercise our common Devotions. And what is to be seen answerable to this, in any Country, where there is not the Liberty of Men's *Persons*, and *Estates*, and *Religion*? Nothing but a mock-outside of Greatness (falsly so called) in the *Prince*, loved only by Slaves; but hated, and abhorred, and perhaps marked out to Destruction, if there remain in Any a Sense of *Freedom*, and of the Dignity of Human Nature? What can com-

penfate the Loss of so singular an Happiness as ~~we~~ ~~R M.~~ we enjoy, and how great should our Sense of it be? The peculiar Glory of the *Crown* of these *Realms* is this, that it is enriched with all those Powers which are necessary for the Defence of the Subject, and the true Greatness of the *Prince*; and that it wants only Those that tend to the Destruction of Liberty, and the Unhappiness of those that wear it. As therefore, it must be the Interest of the *Crown* itself, not to affect *New*, and *Illegal Powers*; so it is manifestly the Interest of every Subject, that the *Crown* should never be robbed of the *Powers* it now possesseth. For whenever this comes to pass, it may be found as great an Injury to the just Liberties of the *Subjects* of this *Kingdom*, as *Arbitrariness* in the *Crown* itself. For then the happy Balance is broken, that keeps all Things in an even State: And such an Alteration in so nice a Constitution must needs give a terrible Shock to the *Publick Happiness*. And I may add, that Experience hath shewn, that nothing is so agreeable to the Welfare of these Kingdoms, as the antient Constitution preserved unviolated; and that whoever have endeavoured to break in upon it, either by infringing the Liberties of the *Subject*, or by too great Encroachments upon the legal Province of the *Prince*, have equally failed of Success; have never been able to establish their own private *Schem*,

S E R M. *Scheme*, but fallen a Sacrifice to their own Im-
III. prudence: This being, therefore, our pecu-
liar Happiness; and an Happiness which this
Day confirmed to us; it becomes us this Day
to fill our Minds with a Sense of it, and to ex-
press our Thankfulness for it. But last of all,

IV. If we be truly thankful to Almighty
God for so excellent a Governor as this Day
ascended the Throne; it is most agreeable to
this Solemnity, to kindle in our Breasts a strong
Resolution, and a zealous Desire, of making
Her a Great, and Glorious QUEEN. Not by
prostituting our *Rights* and *Liberties* to Her
Will; (an Offer which She hath Greatness
enough to disdain;) for that would be to give
Her only the external Appearance of Gran-
deur: but by contributing all we can to
Her true Happiness, and Satisfaction. To
make ourselves a happy People by the Univer-
sal Practice of all that is virtuous and praise-
worthy; This is truly to make our QUEEN
happy. For how can it be that the Ruler of
a Religious People should not be happy? And
such a Ruler, as knows the Value and Import-
ance of Virtue, and Religion? But if You
would be more particular, She Herself hath
directed You to a Method, in which you can-
not fail of making Her an happy and glorious
QUEEN. Pursue the Paths of Peace, and
Union;

Union ; Love, and Concord ; avoid all Quar- SERM.
III.
rels, and mutual Difensions ; entertain Can-
dour, and good Nature, and a true *Christian* ~~~
Moderation : And as this will make You an
Happy People, so You have Her own Royal
Word for it, *This will make Her an Happy
Queen*. Indeed She seems to have ascended
the Throne in order to compose the unhappy
Heats and Violences amongst us : And if Her
Hand do not heal our miserable Breaches, I
fear no other may have the like Advantages ;
or any Possibility of attempting it without rais-
ing Jealousies, and Passions, and meeting with
insuperable Difficulties. She hath not been
wanting, on all Occasions, to make this the
Subje&t of Her publick Conversations with
Her Subje&cts : And, as if nothing delighted
Her more than the Thought of Planting, and
Establishing Peace amongst Her People, She
constantly dwells upon it, and is ever inculca-
ting it. *Peace* was the Subject of that last most
affectionate Speech, which was the Legacy,
as it were, of Her *Predecessor* to these distract-
ed Kingdoms : And She hath, with great
Zeal and Earnestness, pursued the same Divine
Subject. And can it become those who pre-
tend any Love to Her Majesty, to neglect all
Her passionate Entreaties, and instead of
Peace, to sow the Seeds of *Discord* in the
Land ? Far be this from any such ! If they love
not

S E R M. not the good Work of Peace inwardly ; yet,
III. let the Respect they profess for that great Name
which gives Credit to it, engage Them not to
oppose and discourage it ; lest, while they
profess a Veneration for their QUEEN, they
should seem to renounce it all in their Actions.

To conclude all, Let us value our Happiness in such a QUEEN, and pay the profoundest Respect to so much Merit ; Let us assist Her with all Readiness against the common Adversary of Her Throne, and our own Peace ; Let us make Her the QUEEN of a Religious and United People ; and Let us pray to God long to preserve Her a Publick Blessing to these Kingdoms, and the Guardian of the Liberties of all *Europe*, and finally to recompense the Cares and Labours of Her earthly Crown, with a *Crown* of eternal Glory in the World to come.

S E R M O N IV.

Preached before the Right Honourable the
Lord-Mayor, &c. September 29, 1705.

ROMANS xiii. 1.

Let every Soul be Subject to the Higher Powers.

IN the seven first Verses of this *Chapter*, S E R M. the Duty of *Subjects* to Persons in Authority is plainly laid down; and the End of all *Government*, and the Duty of all *Governors*, plainly implied. And it is my Design to draw some useful and proper Observations from what the Apostle hath here delivered upon these two Heads.

I. *With respect to Governors.* And,
II. *With respect to Subjects.*

I. *With respect to Governors.* And here,

1. The *first* Thing I observe, is, That the Apostle declares that they are *ordained of God*, ver. 1. That their Authority is the *Ordinance of God*, ver. 2. That they are the *Ministers of God*, ver. 4, 6. And since an *Apostle* hath so far

SE R M. far concerned himself with the matter of *Go-
vernment*, as to say this ; it cannot be amiss in
Us, who are to be guided by his Directions, to examine, in what Sense this must be under-
stood. Now, one would think it next to impos-
sible that any should understand these, and the
like Expressions, to signify that God had him-
self appointed, for all the Kingdoms of the
Earth, one particular Form of *Government* ; and that all Deviations from that, or Altera-
tions in it, are unlawful, as they are Trans-
gressions of the positive Institution of Almighty
God. For I may, I think, venture to say, that there is not the least Footstep of this Di-
vine Institution in all the Accounts we have of
the Dealings of Providence with Mankind ; nor the least Ground for such an Opinion from
History, or the *Reason* of the Thing. And in
the Words of the *Apostle* now before us, sup-
posing he had confined them to the Form of
Government then in being at *Rome*, can any one
imagine that he intended to declare that the
Roman Emperors, who at first manifestly usur-
ped and maintained their Authority by force of
Arms, had their Commission immediately
from God ? Can any one imagine that *He*
would not have said the same Things, had
the *Republic* continued in all its former Rights,
and antient Liberty ? Or that *He* would not
have

have pressed Obedience and Submission upon S E R M. the Subject, from the same Topics? Nay, IV. that he meant this of all sorts of *Supreme* W W *Powers*, and of *Magistrates* in all Forms of *Government*, is evident from this, which he makes, as it were, the Ground of all these Forms of Expression, *ver. 1.* That *there is no Power but of God*: Which certainly extends equally to all who are possessed of any sort of Power, to be exercised for the Good of the Public, and to all Species of *Governments*. So that it cannot be meant here of any one Form, that it is *of God*, in any other Sense, but that in which it is true of all. And it being true of all, in no other Sense but this, That no Persons are possessed of any Governing Power for the Good of Human Society, but by the Providence of God, and by his Will either permitting or decreeing it: It can in no other Sense be here meant of any one sort of *Governors*, that they have their Authority from God. It is his Will certainly, that there should be *Government* in Human Societies, for the Peace, and Happiness, of Mankind. And so all Governors, of what sort soever, may be said to be *ordained by God*, because it is his Will that there should be Governors. They may be stiled the *Ministers of God*, because they act his Pleasure whilst they do

S E R M. the Duty of good Governors. And their Authority may be said to be the *Ordinance of God*, because it is his Will that some Persons should be vested with Authority, for the good of Human Society. And thus St. Peter seems to understand this Matter, in his first *Epistle*, Chap. ii. 13. where he expressly calls the *King*, and *Governors* under Him, by the Name of an *Human Ordinance*, because the particular *Forms of Government* are of Human Determination: And makes them no otherwise of Divine Appointment, but by saying, ver. 15. That it is the *Will of God* they should be obeyed. Nay, it is evident that what St. Paul saith here, is spoken of all in Power and Authority; of the lowest Degree of *Magistrates*, as well as the highest *Prince* upon Earth. They are all equally *ordained by God*; their Authority equally the *Ordinance of God*; and themselves equally the *Ministers of God*. But these Expressions cannot be meant of *Inferior Magistrates*, in any other Sense, but as they are by God's Providence possessed of Power and Authority; and as it is God's Will they should be obeyed in the due Execution of their Office: And therefore, cannot be meant of the *Highest*, in any other.

2. We may observe that it is declared here, That the sole End and Business of all *Governing*

ing Power, is to consult the good of human S E R M. Society, by maintaining Peace and Virtue in IV. it, ver. 3. *Rulers*, i. e. those who faithfully perform the Office of *Rulers*, are not a Terror to good Works, but to the evil. And ver. 4. *He*, that is, One who is truly a *Governor*, is the *Minister of God* to thee for Good, and the *Minister of God* likewise in another Sense, viz. A *Revenger* to execute *Wrath* upon him that doeth Evil. And ver. 6. These *Rulers* are said to be continually attending upon this very thing. In which account of *Governors* it is not to be supposed that the *Apostle* meant, that All of them did always perform this good Part; but that this was their great Business, and the only End of their Institution, as *He* makes it the Ground of the Obedience to be paid to them. You see here, that *He* doth not give an account of the *Princes* and *Governors* of this World, as of Persons exalted by the immediate Direction of Heaven, to a heighth above their Neighbours, to be Arbitrators, at their own Pleasures, of the Lives and Fortunes of their Fellow-Creatures, and to receive the servile Homage of whole Nations; but as of Persons called by the Providence of God to a difficult and laborious Task; not to live in Ease and Delicacy, but to watch Day and Night for the good of that Society in which

S E R M. they preside ; to be distinguished indeed from
iv. others by the Ensigns of Greatness and Au-
thority, but *this only* to make them more ca-
pable of serving the Public, and consulting the
Interest of the Whole. Their Office indeed is
a glorious Office : But the *Glory* of it doth not
consist in the outward Majesty of the *Governor*,
and the Servility of the *Subject* ; but in the
Happiness, and Peace, that is derived from the
Cares and Labours of the *Supreme Head*, to all
the Members of the *Body Politic*. And that
Governor who contradicts the Character here
laid down by St. *Paul*; who is not a *Terror to*
evil Works, but to good; who is not the *Minister of Good* to the Virtuous, and of *Vengeance* to
the Wicked only ; and who is not continually
watching for the Good and Happiness of hu-
man Society, is not the *Governor* whom St.
Paul means in this Place, or to whom He
here presses Obedience: And much less,
if he manifestly act contrary to the only End of
his Institution ; and endeavour to ruine the
Happiness of that *Society* over which he is
placed. And this may serve to explain yet
farther, in what Sense *these higher Powers are*
from God; *viz.* As they act agreeably to his
Will, which is, that they should promote the
Happiness and Good of human Society,
which St. *Paul* all along supposes them to do.

And

And consequently, when they do the contrary, *SE R M.* they cannot be said to be from God, or to act *iv.* by his Authority, any more than an inferior *~~~* Magistrate may be said to act by a Prince's Authority, whilst he acts directly contrary to his Will. Having thus laid before you what the Apostle hath here delivered, with respect to *Governors*; I come now, as I proposed,

II. To consider what is here said, *With respect to Subjects, and their Duty.* And,

1. The Duty of *Submission*, and *Non-resistance*, is laid down in such absolute Terms, that many have been induced from hence to think, That the Christian Religion denies the Subject all *Liberty* of redressing the greatest *Grievances*. Thus, *ver. 2.* *Whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves Damnation;* And, *ver. 5.* *Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake;* i. e. Not only for Fear of Punishment, but out of a Sense of Duty. Those who do not examine into the Foundation upon which the *Apostle* builds this Doctrine, and into the Whole of what he delivers, may indeed be apt to think, that in these Words there is little Relief allowed to *Subjects*, tho' lying under the greatest Oppressions ima-

SERM. ginable: And yet methinks, on the other
 iv. hand, if the *Apōstle* had done nothing but en-
 ~~~~~ forced the Duty of *Obedience* upon the Subject,  
 it would be reasonable to judge, from the Na-  
 ture of the Thing, and the Absurdities of the  
 contrary, that He meant this only as a general  
 Rule in all ordinary Cases, rather than to  
 imagine that He should absolutely conclude  
 whole Nations under Misery and Slavery with-  
 out hopes of Redrefs. But I observe,

2. That the *Apōstle* doth himself so explain  
 his own Doctrine in this very Place, by the  
 Reasons he gives for this *Obedience* in *Subjects*,  
 and the Account he gives of the Duty of *Gover-  
 nors*, as to leave Subjects all the Liberty that  
 they can reasonably desire. For tho' he doth  
 at first press upon them in unlimited Words,  
 an *Obedience* and *Non-resistance* to the *higher  
 Powers*; yet he manifestly afterwards limits  
 this *Obedience* to such *Rulers*, as truly answer  
 the End of their Institution. The Reason He  
 gives for *Submission* is this, ver. 3. *For Rulers  
 are not a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil;*  
 and ver. 4. Their Busines is declared to be the  
*Execution of Wrath upon him that doeth Evil;*  
 and the Necessity of *Submission* is inferred  
 from hence, ver. 5. *Wherefore ye must needs be  
 Subject, not only for Wrath, but for Conscience  
 sake: that is, it is your Duty to obey the Su-  
 preme*

preme Power, because the great End of all S E R M. human Authority is the Good of the Public; iv. that honest Men may be protected in their ~~~ Properties; and all Violence, and Disorder, and Unhappiness in human Society be prevented and punished; and because it is your Duty to promote that good End. Now, this being the Argument of the *Apostle*; all that we can possibly collect from his Injunctions in this Place is this, That it is the indispensable Duty of Subjects to submit themselves to such *Governors* as answer the good End of their Institution; to such *Rulers* as He here describes; such as are *not a Terror to good Works, but to the evil*; such as promote the publick Good, and are *continually attending upon this very Thing*. To these the profoundest Reverence, and the lowest Submission is due, as to the greatest Blessings a Society can enjoy; and Resistance to these is a most unpardonable Sin. Thus far the *Apostle's* Reasoning holds, and it holds equally under all Forms of Government. For the End of all Government is one and the same, whether it be lodged in the Breast and Will of a single Person, or in the united Counsels and Decrees of many. And if the End of it, which is the public Happiness of Mankind, be truly answered; all Disobedience, and Resistance, is inexcusable.

SERM. The Argument indeed which the *Apostle* first uses for this *Obedience in Subjects*, seems  
iv. ~~as~~ distinct from this, viz. that their *Governours* are of *God*, and *ordained of God*, and *the Ministers of God*. But having shewn that the Meaning of this can only be, that it is his Will that they enjoy this Power for the public Good, it will only follow from hence, that therefore they are to be obeyed in the due Execution of his Will. As far as they deflect from his Will, so far they lose their Titles to these Declarations of the *Apostle*; and so far are they excluded out of his Argument, as He himself afterwards explains it. It is a good Argument, These Persons are the *Ministers of God* for the Happiness of human Society; Therefore, they must be obeyed. But it will not follow from hence, that Obedience is due to them, if they destroy, and ruin, the Happiness of human Society.

But let us suppose, that they are of *God* in the highest Sense possible; that by his immediate Direction, They particularly are appointed to Rule and Govern in the Kingdoms of this World. Well, let us then consider, for what End and Purpose, they are appointed to this Honour: And that, it is agreed on all Hands, is the public Happiness of Mankind. I cannot see, even upon this Supposition, that an unlimited

mitted Submission is due to them. For they ~~S E R M.~~  
were placed in Authority for this good End ~~iv.~~  
only; and they had Power given them by ~~the~~  
God for this Purpose only. If therefore, They  
use their Power to any other Purpose; to the  
Hurt and Prejudice of human Society, as they  
may do, unless they are immediately directed,  
and their Wills forced by God himself; They  
act not in any such Instances by Authority  
from God, but contrary to his Will: Nor can  
they, in such Instances, be called his Vice-  
gerents, without the highest Profaneness:  
And therefore to oppose them in such Cases,  
cannot be to oppose the Authority of God.  
Nay, a *Passive Non-resistance* would appear,  
upon Examination, to be a much greater Op-  
position to the Will of God, than the contrary.  
For though He himself, upon the present Sup-  
position, appointed this Person to govern; yet  
his chief Design in this, being the Good and  
Happiness of Society; tamely to sit still, and  
see that entirely ruined and sacrificed to the  
irregular Will of one Man, seems a greater  
Contradiction to the Will and Design of God,  
than any Opposition can be: For it is a tacit  
Consent to the Ruine and Misery of Mankind,  
whose publick Peace and Happiness is the sole  
End of Government; as well, if it be appoint-  
ed by God himself, as if it be purely of hu-  
man

S E R M. man Institution. But the *Apostle* makes no  
iv. such Supposition as this, but only determines,  
that it is the *Ordinance of God*, that there  
should be *Governors*; and that as long as they  
act agreeably to the End of their Institution,  
it is a great Sin to disobey, or resist them.  
We may judge from what I have said, how  
little Ground there is from any thing here de-  
livered by St. *Paul*, to argue to so unlimited a  
Submission as some inculcate. For we see,  
he hath his Eye all the Way upon the End of  
all Government; and finds his Precepts upon  
this Supposition, that the *Rulers* answer that  
good End. If they do not, or if they set  
themselves to contradict it by Oppression, Vi-  
olence, and Injustice; by invading, and de-  
stroying, the public Happiness, and by bringing  
on public Miseries; the *Apostle* seems not to  
think of recommending Submission to the Sub-  
ject. For whilst he commands Submission,  
he puts no Case of *Princes* acting contrary to  
the Purpose of their Institution, and the sole  
Business of their Office; much less of *Princes*  
who make an express Contract with their Peo-  
ple, and take solemn Oaths to preserve their  
Rights and Liberties; and afterwards break  
through all these Ties to invade their Happi-  
ness. Nor doth he mention any thing of a  
*Passive Submission* in such Cases; but plainly  
leaves

leaves Nations to the Dictates of common ~~S E R M.~~  
Sense, and the powerful Law of Self-preservation: And this, under all Forms of Government equally. For the most Arbitrary *Prince* in the World hath no more Right to make his Subjects Miserable, than the most *Limited*; though the one may attempt it with greater Aggravations than the other. The former is tied up by the Laws of Nature and Reason, and obliged, by the very End of his Exaltation; as truly as the latter is by written Laws, or by solemn Promise: and Submission to the one, in Instances of Violence and Oppression, is no more due, than Submission to the other. For tho' his Authority in carrying forward the *End* of his Power, cannot be resisted without the highest Guilt; yet his Power in acting contrary to that *End* may be opposed without the Shadow of a Crime; nay, with Honour and Glory. He is secure no farther than Force and Power secure him; and what he gets by Violence may be demanded again, and can only be maintained by the same Violence, which first put him in the Possession of it. And as this is true of an absolute Monarch; so is it as true, that, should all who are possessed of Power, in any other Form of Government, consent and agree to enslave the People committed by Providence to their Care, and

SER M. and to make them miserable ; there is nothing  
iv. in Nature, or in the Christian Religion, that  
can hinder that People from redressing their  
Grievances, and from answering the Will of  
Almighty God, so far as to preserve and secure  
the Happiness of the public Society.

But some may say, Where then is the great Virtue of *Submission* to *Governors*, if it be to be practised towards none but such as answer the End of their Institution ; But it is easy to reply, That there is an indispensable Duty upon all, *Subjects*, as well as *Others*, to regard the publick Interest ; and if their Submission help to destroy and ruine that, their Submission cannot be a Virtue. It is due to *Governors*, not for their own sake, but merely for the sake of *public Happiness* : and therefore, can only be praise-worthy when it joins to promote that ; and must degenerate into a Crime, (though it may be accompanied with many Virtues) when it forsakes the View of that, and betrays it into the Hands of Ambition and Violence.

The great Objection against this, though it be all founded upon the Will of God, who sincerely desires the Happiness of *publick Societies*, is this, That it may give occasion to *Subjects* to disturb and oppose their Superiors. But certainly, a Rule is not therefore bad, because

because Men may mistake in the Application S E R M. of it to particular Instances ; or because evil IV. Men may, under the Umbrage of it, satisfy W W their own Passions, and unreasonable Humours ; though these latter, as they are disposed to public Disturbances, would certainly find out some other Pretense for their Behaviour, if they wanted this. The contrary Doctrine to what I have been delivering, we know, by an almost fatal Experience, may be very much abused ; and yet that is not the Reason why it ought to be rejected, but because it is not true. Every Man is to give an Account for his Sins : And the Guilt of those, who, under any Pretense whatsoever, disturb the Government of such as act the Part of good *Rulers*, is so great, that there cannot be a stronger Motive than this against Resistance and Opposition to such. *For they that resist shall receive to themselves Damnation*, is pronounced against such a Resistance ; and if Men will not regard such a Declaration, who can help it ? The Truth ought not to be concealed, or to suffer in the Opinions of Men, for the sake of such an accidental Inconvenience.

Thus have I endeavoured to give a just Account of what St. *Paul* hath, in this *Chapter*, delivered concerning *Governors* and *Subjects*. And though some may perhaps be apt to call this

S E R M. this by the Name of *Politics*; and to censure  
iv. it as Foreign to our Office, and this Place,  
~~~~ (which they are sure to do then only when  
their own Notions are contradicted;) yet I
must declare, that I cannot think it an unbecoming,
or even an unnecessary Part, of our
Care, to settle the Measures of Christian Duty
in all Cases, or to endeavour to give a true
Explication of what so great an *Apostle* hath de-
livered with some Vehemence, and as a Mat-
ter of great Importance. All that I have now
attempted, is to explain what an inspired Per-
son wrote: And if this Explication be just,
the Censure must light at last upon the *Apo-
stle* himself; who, I cannot but think, knew
very well what became his Office, and what
belonged to his Province.

But though I have finished what I at first
proposed, yet I still intreat your Patience,
whilst I offer to you some farther Considerati-
ons not unsuitable to the present Occasion.
And these are such as naturally flow from what
hath been discoursed concerning the *End* and
Purpose of all Government, whether that of
Princes, or that of inferior *Magistrates*; and
will serve to give us a compleat Idea of a good
Governor. As,

1. It is highly requisite that all in Authority
should be happy in a *public Spirit*, and a true

Regard

Regard to the public Interest. For it being the ~~S E R M.~~
only End for which they are cloathed with iv.
Authority, to serve the Public, and promote ~~the~~
the Happiness of That : if they be led by pri-
vate Interests of their own ; if they be Slaves
to Covetousness, or Ambition, or Effemina-
cy ; if there be any thing in the World which
they have more in their Eye, than the Advan-
tage of human Society ; This must warp them
extremely from the main Design of their Institu-
tion. And, as far as they are tainted with a vi-
cious *Self-Interest*, so far do they decline from
the Dignity of their Character. But when
their Breasts are thoroughly fired with a Love
to the Public Interest, and a Resolution of
prosecuting *that* ; happy is the Nation that
obeys such a *Prince*, and happy the Society
that enjoys such a Governor. But,

2. There ought to be also in a *Governor* a
deep Sense of Religion ; of the great Import-
ance of Virtue, and of the bad Influence and
Malignity of Vice and Immorality. For
since one great End of his Office is the *Punish-
ment of those who do Evil*, and the *Praise of
them who do Well* : there will be but little
Heart to prosecute this, unless there be first a
full Persuasion that there is an essential Diffe-
rence between Good and Evil ; that the Prac-
tise of all Virtue will make a Nation happy ;
and

SE R M. and the Practise of Vice derive Curses and

IV. Ruine upon a People, as well in the Nature of the Thing it self, as in the Decree of Almighty God. A Ruler that firmly believes this, will act his Part with some Zeal and Concern; and it will tenderly affect his Mind, to see his Country likely to be undone by Debauchery: And He will employ his Thoughts Day and Night, how to reform the Manners of Men; or at least, how to put a stop to the Impudence of those who will not be reformed. But particularly,

3. There must be a great Love to Justice, and a great Regard to Peace. The one engages a *Governor* to do that which is exactly right between Man and Man; and the other influences him to reconcile the contending and quarrelling Parts of Mankind; and soften the Hearts of Men into Love and Friendship. This Justice, which I here speak of, though it must not act blindfold; yet it must be blind to all outward Regards, and all Persons: And nothing of Interest, or of Party, or of personal Respect or Prejudice, ought ever to sway in the Distribution of Rewards and Punishments: Which do but little Service to the Cause of Honesty and Virtue, unless when it is apparent that they are dispensed for the sake of Virtue itself, and not on any base and sordid

Account.

Account. — And if the strictest Justice should once be disregarded, and unjust Judgments come into use ; the great End of *Magistracy* is perverted, and the Happiness of Society shaken : And every Step this Way would be a Step to public Misery. And then, where there is not a sacred Regard to *Peace*, there will be no Compassion for the Divisions and Heats of a Nation ; and consequently no Advances made towards an universal Love and Friendship : the want of which alone must one time or other bring about the Ruine of a Nation.

4. To all other Qualifications there must be joined a blameless Example. The Reason is, because every thing that tends to promote Religion and Happiness in a Society, is the Concern of all who have *Authority* in it. Now it is with Those who are to punish Vice, and protect Virtue, just as it is with Those who are to teach the Practice of Virtue, and the Abhorrence of Vice. It is an Observation easy and obvious to every Body, that those who are the *Preachers* of Righteousness do no great Service to the Cause, but perhaps the contrary, if their Examples unhappily contradict their Precepts. And it is certainly the same with Respect to Those, whose Busines is to punish Vice. If, whilst they punish it in Inferiors,

SERM. They themselves are known to be guilty of it,
 IV. the Correction indeed may make the Offender
 avoid the Light ; but it will never make him
 in Love with Virtue. He will be apt to think,
 He is punished only because He is Poor ; and
 not considerable enough to be in Office him-
 self : And may be hardened to Vice, whilst
 He sees Men making use of their Authority in
 punishing others, only as it were for a Screen
 to their own greater Indulgence.

You see from hence what a Concern there lies upon all in Authority from the Highest to the Lowest; that *Magistracy* is not a Matter of Pomp and Retinue to attract the Eyes, and raise the Wonder of the Multitude; but a Business of Labour and Difficulty, to be undertaken with Seriousness, and to be managed with the greatest Prudence and Conduct.

It is the invaluable Happiness of this Kingdom, to see all these *Qualifications* united in its *Supreme Governor*; who seems to know no greater Satisfaction than what arises from the good Estate of the Publick, and who directs all her Cares, not to make herself Great, but her Subjects Happy. Such an Example, one would think, cannot but influence all who are in Authority under Her, to promote the same good End, the public Happiness. We are in many Things the Envy, as well as the

Wonder,

Wonder, of other Nations. Our Liberties ~~S E R M.~~
still preserved; Our Constitution still happily
tempered; and the profession of our Religion
still secure. But we want many things to
make the Possession of these great Blessings
certain and lasting to us; but especially an
universal Practice of Virtue, and a Spirit of
Peace and Love. It is your great Concern (I
speak to all who bear any Office in this great
City) to promote the Practice of Virtue, and
Peace. The former is discouraged, and en-
dangered, by every public Act of Profaneness
and Irreligion: which ought therefore, to be
severely punished, lest the Poison should
work itself insensibly from some Parts into the
whole Body. And the latter is highly endan-
gered by all Men of Passion and Violence; by
those who vent such Principles as, in effect,
call in question Her *Majesty's* Title to the
Crown; by those who deride and expose the
Principles upon which our present Establish-
ment, and all our future Hopes, are founded;
and by all whose Business it is to raise mutual
Jealousies and Heats amongst us. Such as
these, it is too well known, discover them-
selves every Day in open Light. And shall
not others be as ready to preserve the public
Happiness, as these Men are to destroy it?
Or, is there no Way of redressing such public

SERM. and such destructive Evils? It is a Shame to a
iv. Nation not to have good Laws: But it is a
much greater Shame to have them, and not
to put them in Execution. It is a Shame to
a Nation, that there should be any Persons
belonging to it, so little sensible of the Happiness
it enjoys, as to libel and disturb such a
QUEEN, and such a Government: But it is a
greater Shame, that no Method should be
found of effectually punishing what so highly
deserves it. Let it therefore appear,
that you are truly sensible of the Nature and
End of your Trusts, by your hearty En-
deavours to promote the Happiness of the Pub-
lic. Let a true Regard to that discover itself
in all your Proceedings. Let your Examples
allure to Virtue, as well as your Punishments
deter from Vice. Let your Zeal discover itself
against the Enemies of Religion, and of the
public Peace. Let it be seen that you *bear*
not the Sword in vain. Thus you will make
this City a Praise in the whole Earth, and
draw down Blessings from Heaven upon the
whole Nation.

*The Happiness of the present Establishment, and
Unhappiness of absolute Monarchy.*

SERMON V.

Preached at the Assizes at *Hertford*, March
22, 1707-8.

1 SAM. viii. 9.

Now therefore, hearken unto their Voice: Howbeit, yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the King that shall reign over them.

IT is my Design to take occasion from these SERMON. Words, which I have proposed in this Chapter. v.

I. To lay before you the *History* recorded in this *Chapter.*

II. To apply it to *Ourselves*, and this whole *Kingdom*, by some proper and useful *Observations.*

I. I beg leave to lay before you the *History* recorded in this *Chapter:* And this will be comprised under the *Four* following *Remarks.*

SE R M. 1. We find the *Israelites*, after all the Miracles
wrought by Providence in their behalf, so little
sensible of the Difference between *Slavery* and
Liberty, as to betray the greatest Uneasiness
under a *Government*, in which *God* himself pre-
sided, and on all Occasions shewed himself in
a peculiar manner their *King*. The Pretense
indeed, was taken from the Wickedness of the
Sons of Samuel, who *took Bribes*, and *perverted*
Judgment, ver. 3, 4, 5. but it is manifest that
their chief Design was not to rectify this; but
to introduce the *Scheme* some amongst them
had laid, and to indulge their own foolish and
weak Desire, of being ruled after the manner
of their *Neighbours*. For, 2. Instead of de-
siring a Redress of their Grievances, or leaving
it to the Wisdom of *Almighty God* to prescribe
a *Remedy*; they come to his *Prophet*, perempto-
rily demanding *a King to judge them like all*
the Nations round about, ver. 5. that is, as
appears afterwards, an *Absolute Monarch*, go-
verning by his single Will, without the Re-
straint of any *Co-ordinate Legislative Powers*.
The *Prophet*, in great Uneasiness, applies him-
self to *God*. Upon this Occasion therefore, we
have the justest Reason to expect to know the
Thoughts of Almighty God concerning *Absolute*
Monarchy; whether those other Nations were
subjected to it by his Original and Immediate

Appointment; whether the *Lineal Succession* S E R M. of *Males* ought inviolably to be preserved, upon v. Pain of incurring his Displeasure; whether he created Thousands of Men to be Slaves for the sake of the outward Grandeur of *One*, as weak and as mortal as themselves; whether this Form of *Government* be the greatest Security to the *Liberty* and Happiness of *Subjects*; and the like Opinions and Notions embraced by some Persons, since that Time. Now, upon enquiry, we find, 3. That *Almighty God* is so far from applauding this *Form of Government* as the *Best*, or as his own *Institution*; that he gives by his *Prophet* a very sad, and lamentable Account of the Miseries and Unhappinesses peculiarly belonging to it, and consequent upon the *Establishment* of it: Such an Account as must be a *Demonstration* to all, who have not the most unworthy Notions of *Almighty God*, that he could have no Original Design of appointing such a *Form of Government*, sacredly and inviolably to be kept up in *any* Nation; much less, in *all* the Nations, of the World. This Account is set before the *Israelites* from the 10th Verse to the 19th, in which the *Prophet* doth not intend to insinuate that every particular *Absolute Monarch* will use his *Power* after so very ill a manner as is there described; but to paint before their Eyes some of the ma-

serm. ny sore Calamities, which are too probable
v. Consequences upon the *Establishment of Absolu-*
tute *Monarchy* in any Nation: And these may
be all summed up in one comprehensive Word,
and that is, *Slavery*. *A State* opposite to *Li-*
berty, and void of *Property*; in the Descrip-
tion of which, *Subjects* are here represented as
Slaves in their *Persons*; and their *Children*,
their *Possessions*, and the *Labour* of their
Hands, forced from them, usurped, and con-
verted to the private use of their *Monarch*.
This is set before the *Israelites*, as the *Condition*
of *Subjects* under that sort of *Government* which
they were now desirous of, in order to deter
them from so foolish a Thought. But, the
People still persisting, notwithstanding so plain
a Representation; *Almighty God*, as a Punish-
ment for their *Folly*, and former Ingratitude,
under the *Best of Governments*, grants their re-
peated Desire; and resolves to establish the *Go-*
vernment among *Them*, which they so much
admired among their *Neighbours*, ver. 22.

But then in doing this, it is very remarka-
ble, in the following *History*, that he doth not
recur to the *Patriarchal Scheme*, so celebrated
of later Years; that He doth not point out to
them (which He could most easily have done)
the *Eldest Son* of the *Eldest House*, amongst
them, and command them to keep inviolably
to

to the *Male Line* in a *regular Descent*; but S E R M.
that, without mentioning any thing of this, v.
He chuseth *Saul* in his *Father's Life-time*: 
after him, *David*, the *Youngeſt* of many
Brethren; after him, *Solomon*, and his *Poste-
rity*. So that, in this *Kingdom*, established by
God Himself, it was so ordered, that there
never was one *King* lineally descended of that
Branch, which alone could lay claim to *Pre-
eminence* and *Government* by *Right of Primo-
geniture*. It is a very unlikely matter, therefore,
that the *Jews* could have any strong Impres-
sions concerning this unalienable, unalterable
Right, which They saw superseded for ever
by *God* Himself, without any Notice taken of
it; and much more so, to be sure, that the
Heathen Nations should have any such Notion,
who had so much less Light concerning the
Will of God. But, to let this pass, it is cer-
tainly very well worth our observing, that, in
this Part of *Sacred History*, and upon an Occa-
ſion (the only Occasion, I may say,) given to
Almighty God, by Mankind, to declare his Mind
plainly concerning the Institution of *Absolute
Monarchy*; and the Usefulness of it to *human
Society*, and the unalienable *Right of Primo-
geniture*; we meet with nothing but what tends
to depress it lower than any other *Human
Form*, and to induce us to think that it is no
Part

90 *The Happiness of the present Establishment,*

S E R M. Part of God's *Institution*, that the Lives and

v. Fortunes of the *Inferior Part of Mankind* must be sacrificed, at all Adventurers, to the imagined *Right of First-born Males*. This I could not help taking notice of, whilst the Representation of this *History*, which I have made, is fresh in your Minds. But now I proceed, as I proposed, in the *second place*,

II. To apply it to ourselves, and this whole *Kingdom*, by some proper and useful *Observations*. And these shall be such as are suitable, *first*, to the happy *Establishment* which we live under; and *secondly*, to the unhappy Notions of *some* amongst us.

First, The happy Estate of this *Island*, under the present *Establishment*, offers itself to our Consideration, and deserves, in a particular manner to be reviewed, and valued by us. In our *Government*, indeed, we do not come up to that Happiness the *Jews* enjoyed, before they extorted a *King* from Heaven. *They* were governed, in an extraordinary and particular manner, by *God* himself: And to be governed by *God*, is to be governed by a Being void of all Passion, and Prejudice, and Weakness; by a Being that could not injure them, either out of *Malice*, or *Ignorance*: and if any *Grievances* were permitted

mitted under his Inspection, by means of ^{S E R M.} frail Men employed under him, He himself ^{v.} was at hand, free of Access, and most willing, and able to redress them. To be absolutely under the *Government* of such a *Prince*, and *Lord*, implies in it the truest *Liberty*; because it is exactly what reasonable and *sociable* Creatures ought to wish for: And *Absolute Monarchy*, administered by such Power, and Wisdom, is the strongest, and most unmoveable Security of the Happiness of those who live under it. But, setting aside this extraordinary Interposition of *Almighty God*, and speaking of *Government* as in the Hands of *Mortal Men*, under his ordinary *Providence*, we must say, that *that* Form comes the nearest to his *Pattern*, and his *Will*, which best answers the *Ends* of *Government*; and secures and establishes most effectually the *Liberty* and *Property*, the *Quiet* and *Happiness*, of the *Subject*, and that *that* is at the greatest distance from *Him*, which is most of all others likely to introduce those *Evils*, and *Miseries*, which it is his *Will* should be prevented by *Government*. The Description he gives, by his *Prophet*, of the *Evils* consequent upon the *Establishment* of *Absolute Monarchy* in the Hands of weak and frail Men, is as contrary to the *Government* of *God*, or to the *Government* of *good Angels*, under his ^{Inspection,}

S E R M. spection, as the greatest *Darkness* and *Slavery*

v. is to the truest *Liberty*. And therefore, it is the

weakest thing in the World to argue from *Almighty God's Absolute Monarchy*, or from imaginary *Monarchies* amongst the good *Angels*, to the Necessity of the *same* amongst mortal Men: for tho' they may agree in being *Absolute*, yet they may be as contradictory as *Absolute Light*, and *Absolute Darkness*. But certainly, it is no such Weakness to argue that That *Form of Government*, whatsoever it be, under which the *Civil and Religious Rights of Subjects* are most likely to be effectually preserved, is the *Form*, which bears most Resemblance to the *Example*, and most Conformity to the *Will*, of *God*. Had it pleased *Almighty God* to have pointed out any particular *Form*, as of necessity to be submitted to by all *Nations*; I should certainly think that *this* was the best, and happiest that could be devised, for the carrying forward the *Ends of human Society*. But since he hath rather seen fit to leave Mankind in *this*, as in many other *Cases*, to the Dictates of their own Reason, joined to the Pressure of their own Wants, it will be proper for us to consider, in order to judge the better of our own Happiness, the following *Particulars*:

1. That the great *End of Government* is the Happiness of the *governed Society*.

2. That

2. That the *Happiness* of a governed Society S E R M. consists in the Enjoyment of *Liberty*, *Property*, v. and the *free Exercise* of *Religion*. And,

3. How far this *Happiness* is attained under our *present Establishment*.

1. I say, The great *End of Government* is the *Happiness* of the *governed Society*. Let not any here so mistake me, as to think I mean by this to exclude the *Happiness* of such as undertake, and truly discharge, the laborious and difficult Task of *Governing*: For the *Happiness* of *these* is never so established, and so unmoveably secured, as by the *Happiness* of the *People* whom they govern. But I mean it against such as shew a Willingness to distinguish between the *Happiness* of the *one*, and of the *other*; and who argue, as if they thought *Government* instituted chiefly for the outward *Glory* and *Grandeur* of some particular *Mortals*, with so little Regard to all others of the same *Flesh and Blood*, as if they had no Part in *Human Society*, and were made for nothing but to gaze, and adore, and serve. Upon this Foundation, we see, *Monarchs* have been induced to engage in Wars merely for their own *Glory*; and vainly to attempt to increase the Number of their *Slaves*, as a pleasing *Sacrifice* to their own *Vanity*. Upon this Foundation *Monarchs* have been encouraged to break

S E R M. break through all Laws, *Divine* and *Human* ;

v. and to extirpate, or torment their best *Subjects*,
for their own imaginary Honour. But the great *Governor* of Heaven and Earth knows no such *End* of their *Institution* as this; and consequently no such *Reason* for the *Submission* of their *Subjects*. The Degrees of *Superiority* established in the World, either by *Nature* or *Custom*, are designed for the good of Families and Societies: And if any *Superiority* be supposed to be established immediately by *God* himself, it is still more certain that it is not possible He should have any other *End* in *view*, but the making *Society* happier than it would be without it. I need not be any longer upon this, because it is seldom denied, unless it be unwarily and consequentially, by Men who are resolved at all Adventures, to defend the *Cause* they have once espoused.

2. I come now, *secondly*, to observe, that the Happiness of a *governed Society* consists in the Enjoyment of *Liberty*, *Property*, and the *free Exercise* of *Religion*. And under this Head there will be little requisite, unless it be to consider what we mean by *Liberty*, and *Property*.

Now when we speak of *Liberty* in a *governed Society*, this we must understand to be something as really different from that *Licentiousness* which

which supposeth no *Government*, as from that ~~S E R M.~~
Slavery which supposeth *Tyranny*; and consequently to be a *State*, between *Servitude* on the one hand, and *Lawlessness* on the other: A Condition, perfectly consistent with the good *Government* of the *Society*; and containing in it all that *Freedom* which is truly, and reasonably to be desired by any Member of it. On the Confines of this *State*, I say, on the one side stands *Slavery*; which is an absolute *Subjection* to the *Will* of another, not bounded by any wholesome and good *Laws*; which, we are assured by the *Prophet*, is not likely to consist with the Good and Happiness of the *governed Society*. On the other hand stands *Confusion*, or *Licentiousness*, without *Law*, or *Government*; a *State* in which every *Man* is his own *Judge*, and his own *Avenger*. Between the two *Extremes* stands that *Liberty*, which alone ought to be valued; a *Freedom*, restrained by beneficial *Laws*, and living and dying together with *Public Happiness*. It is necessary to say this, because many take delight to misrepresent the *Cause* of *Liberty*; and to make the *World* believe that nothing is aimed at, by the *Advocates* for it, but a *Licentious State* of *Anarchy*, and *Lawless Confusion*: Whereas it is manifest, that *Liberty*, in a *governed Society*, is something as different from *this*, as from the *other*; and that

SERM. that the Friends of *Anarchy* (if there be any such) may as well represent the *Patrons of Liberty*, as the *Patrons of Tyranny and Oppression*, because they are in earnest for the Restraint of *Laws* and *good Government*. Now, if any one please to say, as some have done, that this is but the Pretence and Shadow of *Liberty*, because every Man in this State cannot do just what He always could wish to do ; but is in many Actions restrained and curbed ; I answer, that this will equally prove that Obedience to the *Laws of God* is not *Liberty* ; which it may certainly with Justice be called, because by *Liberty* we understand something valuable and desirable ; and his *Service* is a *Freedom* from such things, as we ought in Reason, and true Love to ourselves, to desire to be free from. So likewise, in the *Case* before us, the *Liberty* we speak of is the *Liberty* of a *Society* rescued from the Inconveniences, and Evils, of *Confusion*, and *Equality* : And the *Liberty* I have described, is a *Freedom* only from such *Evils* as it is our Interest to be free from ; not a *Freedom* from such *good Restraints*, as it is reasonable for us to wish and desire *sociable Creatures* to be under : Which would be a *State* of *Misery*, not to be desired by any *reasonable Creatures* ; and such a *State*, as, if we were once reduced to it, we should *everaups* study

study and labour, as soon as possible, to S E R M. change.¹ See the 4th Part of the 2d. v.

This Account of true *Liberty*, as it respects  *Civil Society*, will lead us to the like Account of *Property*, considered likewise with relation to a well-governed *Society*. This I take to be such a *Possession* of what we call our own, as cannot be shaken by any Humour or Arbitrary Will of *One Man*, or *Party* of Men; but yet must be subject to the Determination of such *Laws* as are for the common Good and Interest of the whole *Society*. Nor is this *Subjection* any thing but what is desirable in *Society*: because, though it be possible that a particular Member of it may accidentally suffer by them, yet he might expect to suffer much more without them; and indeed could have no Hopes of that *secure Possession* of any thing, any longer than he could defend himself by *Force* and *Cunning*. So that *Property*, in a well-governed *Society*, is something as different from *Nominal Possession* under *Absolute Monarchy*, (which, according to God's own Description, consists in the being *Tenants at Will*, to one weak, and passionate Man, and in the Enjoyment of nothing any longer than till he comes to imagine it necessary to his private Pleasure, or Glory;) as it is from that *momentary Possession*, which belongs to a *State* in which all are

98 *The Happiness of the present Establishment, &c. &c. &c.* equally without *Law, or Government.* It stands between the Two Extremes, as secure as the *Uncertainties* of this World permit the Affairs of Mortals to be; and guarded, at least in most Instances, against all Attempts of *Mere Violence, and Apparent Fraud*, from whatsoever Hands the *Injury* may come. I know this Difference is ridiculed by some: and it is said that *Subjects* have *Properties* under the most *Absolute Monarchs*, as well as under other sort of *Governments*. I grant that they may have *Properties* secure from the Attacks of other *Subjects*, unless such as are protected by the *Monarch*: but these *Properties* are only during his Pleasure, which is as uncertain as his *Humour, or his Passions*; and are described by *Almighty God* himself to be fixed on so precarious a Bottom, as that the *Subjects* Possession of them is entirely at his Mercy.

To *Liberty, and Property*, I added the free *Exercise of Religion*, as necessary to the Happiness of a *governed Society*; because, as there is no *Tyranny* so odious to *God* as *Tyranny over the Conscience*; so is there no *Slavery* so uneasy and ignominious, as a forced *Religion*, or a *Worship* imposed upon weak Men by the *Fear, or Application*, of outward Inconveniences: besides that nothing promotes the flourishing Condition of a *Nation* more than the

the *Indulgence* of this *Freedom* to all whose ~~ER~~ M. *Principles* are not manifestly inconsistent with the *Public Safety*.^{v.} And that this *Freedom*, together with the *Enjoyment* of *Civil Liberty*, and *Property*, as before described, must be an *invaluable Happiness* to a *Nation*, needs no Proof; unless it be to Those who are grown weary of their own Happiness by *Use*, and have forgotten what Terror there was once in the Fears of the contrary Unhappiness. But this may more plainly appear from what will offer itself upon the *third Particular*, under which I proposed,

3. To consider how far this Happiness is attained, and secured, by the present *National Establishment*. Now here it must be acknowledged, that this *World* was never designed for a State of Perfection: and that there cannot be any *Form of Government* contrived and managed by fallible Men, which will not be liable to *Inconveniences*. But certainly it may be said, that the *Ends of Government* will hardly ever be answered under *Any*, if they be not, under that *Excellent Establishment* we can at present boast of. It is certain, there might be *Liberty* and *Property* under *Absolute Monarchs*; were they all, as good *Angels*, or as *God* himself. But we know, from his *Prophet*, that it is not likely there should be *Either*,

S E R M. where *They* are once established. On the contrary, by the peculiar Mercy of God, our *Constitution* is so framed, that we enjoy all the *Liberty* that is consistent with good *Government*; without lying at the Mercy of any one Person. By the same good *Providence*, we can much more justly call our *Possessions*, and our *Labours*, *our own*, than *They* can, who are liable to the Invasion of an *Absolute Monarch*, whensoever He pleaseth. Again, It is *possible* that we might have a *Freedom of Religion* under a *Popish Government*, and a *Popish Direction*: but I hope I may say, It is for ever certain to us all, under an *Administration* entirely *Protestant*. Some indeed seem to think our *Liberties* most safe, our *Properties* most secure, nay, our very *Religion* best guarded, under *Arbitrary Power*, and *Popish Faith*. But it is wonderful to *Others*, how they can unite together such disjointed, such irreconcileable Things. And it is to be hoped that *Common Sense* is not so wholly lost amongst us, as that any such *Fallacies* can be put upon our *Understandings*, as may make us undervalue our unparalleled *Happiness*. These *Blessings* are made more diffusive, and lasting, by an *Union* of two *Kingdoms*, whose *Separate Interests* used to portend *Public Calamity*: And all rendered yet more secure to ourselves, and our latest *Posterity*, by

Establishing the Succession in the Protestant S E R M. Line; without which it is too probable that v. all that we have been hitherto labouring, at great Expense of Money and Blood, would be of no Importance to succeeding Generations. So that this great *Island* is *One Kingdom*, governed after the most desirable manner, and the least liable to great Evils. True *Liberty* flourishes; *Property* is securely possessed; and all enjoy the Freedom of Worshiping *God* as their *Consciences* direct: and a Prospect of a long *Enjoyment* of all these Happinesses is afforded us by the distant View of *succeeding Princes*, Who, we may hope, will learn from the *present Example* to account it their chief Glory to preserve these Blessings; and their own greatest Happiness, to make their People happy. And need I tell, to what it is that we owe these singular and invaluable Happinesses? Is it not too plain to need any Proof, that we owe them all entirely to the late *Revolution*, founded upon the *Principles of Liberty*? Without *This*, *Absolute Power* had been by this Time firmly settled, and secured by Force of *Arms*; and that *Popish Pretender*, whom we all now profess to detest, and abjure, been the *Established Monarch* of this *Kingdom*. Without *This*, it had been impossible for us to have known the Blessings of the *present Reign*, or

S E R M. to have hoped for any succeeding ones under
v. the *Protestant Line*. In one word, Without
~~~~~ *This, our Liberties, and Properties, had long*  
ago been nothing but *Words*; and our *Religion*  
nothing but *Passive Obedience*. Could one  
think it possible for Any to be insensible of our  
present *Happy Estate*; or of the *Unhappiness* of  
the contrary? Yet, the *Notions of some* amongst  
us are too plain to be covered, and of too  
great Importance to be overlooked, which leads  
me to what I proposed in the next Place, *viz.*

Secondly, To make farther Application of  
the *History*, which I have just now been consider-  
ing, to Ourselves, by some *Observations* aris-  
ing from the apparent Uneasinesses of some  
amongst us. For, as the *Jews* were ungrateful  
to the *God* who ruled them; and so insensible  
of the happy *Government* they were under, as  
to desire a Change from *Liberty* and *Property*,  
to *Slavery* and *Vassalage*: As under every  
little Trial of their *Faith* they repented, and  
regretted that *Glorious Revolution* which freed  
them from *Egyptian Slavery*; reviling their  
great *Deliverer*, *Moses*, and wearying out his  
*Successors* with their perpetual *Discontents*, till  
they brought themselves to a State of *Servitude*  
again: So we find amongst ourselves but too  
much *Ingratitude*, too much *Insensibility*, too  
much *Desire of Future Slavery*, and too little

an Aversion to a Change of the Happiest Establishment this Island ever yet enjoyed, into the most unhappy. And that this Complaint may not seem a groundless Imagination, I must observe,

1. That such Schemes of Government are publicly and daily proposed, and maintained, amongst us, as are absolutely inconsistent with the Security of the present Establishment; and these bound upon the Consciences of Men by the pretended Will of God, and the Terrors of his Displeasure; and these applauded and recommended by many, who, it is to be charitably hoped, are not sensible of their Consequences. The Right of Primogeniture in the Male Line is set up above any other Right, and above the Happiness of Thousands of People united. This is declared to be the Voice of God; though where it is to be found, I know not, unless it be in the secret Whispers of a Dream. But what then must become of the Title of our present Gracious Queen, to whose Support all Her good Subjects are now offering their Lives and Fortunes? She is in Possession indeed: But, according to this Scheme, there is always a better Claimer than Herself. For, Can a Woman be a Male Heir? Or, May not any Pretender, whether Legitimate, or not; May not any neighbouring Patron of Pretenders, nay, any mad First-born, of her own Sub-

SERMONS, upon this absurd Scheme, be a better

v. *Claimer than Herself?* For it is *possible* that any such *Man* that can be named may be the *Eldest Son of the Right Branch* even from *Noah* himself; but absolutely *impossible* that a *Woman* should. Behold at once that *Sex* for every cut off from all possible Claim, to which this *Nation* must own itself extremely indebted, both for *Glory Abroad*, and *Wise Administration at Home*! Behold at one Stroke the *Protestant Line* defeated, and set aside; and the *Popish Branches* recalled, by the modest Pleadings of some, who, you are desired to believe, wish extremely well to their *Country*. But, lest this should be too gross to be easily swallowed, 2. We are frequently entertained with the great Praises of an *Absolute Monarchy*, as the only *Legitimate*, and *Jure Divino* Government; the only Form agreeable to the *Will of God*; and assured, over and over again, that all other *Forms* are no better than *Bastard Governments*. Behold again, our whole Constitution absolutely at one Blast overthrown! For if so, what have we to do, but, under Pain of God's Displeasure, to dissolve all Appearances of *Parliaments*, as only *Encumbrances*, and *Checks* upon *Absolute Power*? But, lest the *People* should not embrace this with an *Implicit Faith*, the *Patrons* of this *Doctrine* condescend to argue from

from publick Good, and even to appeal to their S E R M v. Judgment, so much ridiculed and exposed by them on other Occasions. We are told therefore, that *Absolute Monarchy* is the only Government for our Good; nay, the strongest Security to our Liberties and Properties; against the Judgment even of God himself. But who will not easily believe so plain a Point as this, that *We* of this Kingdom are greater Slaves than the Subjects of *France*? And that it is our greatest Interest to receive with open Arms the mild and gentle Government, under which They are so free, and happy? Thus do some amongst us, like the *Jews*, solicit Heaven for an *Absolute Monarchy*. But neither will this so easily be swallowed; and therefore, 3. It is publickly taught, and inculcated with great Earnestness, and Repetition, that it had been better for this Nation never to have departed from *Absolute Passive Obedience*; and that *Non-resistance* in all *Cases* is for the Interest of Ourselves and Posterity after us: Though it be to *Resistance* justly called for, and prudently managed, that we owe our present *Queen*, and the Hopes of a good *Succession*; our free *Parliaments*, our *Liberties*, our *Properties*, and the secure Profession of our *Religion*. I desire therefore to know, What this is, but to tell us plainly, that it had been for our Interest to have

106 *The Happiness of the present Establishment,*  
S E R M. have permitted a late King to have overturned  
v. our whole *Constitution*, and to have imposed  
upon us a pretended Son; to have wanted the  
*Blessings* of the present Reign, and the Hopes  
of any future Security; and to have been,  
even to this Day, under the Sway of that *Pre-  
tender*, who hath now alarmed us? And what  
is this but to tell us, at this seasonable Juncture,  
that it is for our Interest to recal, and submit  
to, Him, returning with penitent Hearts to  
that happy *State*, in which we should have  
been, had *Non-Resistance* been entirely practi-  
sed. Others, who will not go so far as this,  
yet join in blackening that *Resistance*, and that  
*Revolution*, on which our present *Establishment*  
is founded. Nay, If they detest the *Invasion*  
threatened by a pretended *Prince*, they think  
they cannot sufficiently do it, unless at the  
same Time they detest that *Resistance*, with-  
out which the *Invader* had now actually been  
upon the Throne; and boast of their constant  
Adherence to such *Doctrines* as condemn the  
late Glorious *Revolution*, and naturally tend to  
shake the hearty Affection of Men towards an  
*Establishment*, founded, according to them, upon  
what was perfectly displeasing to *Almighty God*.  
It is with Reluctance that I speak after this  
manner: But why should such Persons take it  
amiss, if others equally detest those *Doctrines*;

the Practice of which would unavoidably have s E R M. excluded our *Excellent Queen*, and the whole v. *Protestant Line*; and established that very ~~Protestant~~ *tender* upon the Throne, whose Attempt is now detested? Doth not our *Queen* herself place her *Security* in the Cause of *Liberty* which She maintains? And doth not She profess, that Her chief Dependence must be upon those who have, upon all Occasions, expressed their Zeal for the Support of the late *Revolution*? And shall we tell Her that *She* is not *safe*, if the *Revolution*, which *saved* her, can be defended: or that *Subjects* are not *Dutiful*, if they be not *Slaves*? Whereas the present *Establishment* cannot be *secure*, unless the *Revolution* be a good *Foundation*; and the *Duty* of *Subjects* is something vastly different from the *Vassalage of Slaves*; and their *Liberty* at once the *Ornament and Support of the British Crown*. Pardon me, if *Respect* for so good a *Queen*, and Concern for so excellent an *Establishment*, and *Regard* for the Happiness of Ourselves and *Posterity*, have led me to express some *Zeal* against *Principles* and *Doctrines* which have of late been as warmly espoused, as if the *Revolution* had in its Consequences proved the greatest Misfortune to the Nation; and it were now high Time to get rid of all the *Effects* of it yet remaining, by submitting

108 *The Happiness of the present Establishment, SERM.* to the *Pretensions of a Nominal Prince, supported by a Monarch,* who seems not much to delight in any other *Obedience of Subjects* but what is *Passive*, and what groans under the *Burthen* either of his *Glory*, or his *Cruelty*.

I have now laid before you some *Observations*, respecting as well the *present Happiness* we enjoy, as the unhappy *Notions* of *some* amongst us. Almighty God thought it a good *Argument* against *Absolute Monarchy*, to shew the *Israelites* the *Unhappiness* and *Servitude* of *Subjects*, introduced by that *Form of Government*. In Imitation of so unexceptionable a *Pattern*, we can do no less than *protest solemnly* to Persons *like-minded*, and shew them the *Manner of the King they would have to reign over them*; and the *Manner of the Kingdom* they would gladly see established amongst us. And this I thought peculiarly agreeable to this Time, when the *Nation* hath been alarmed by the *Pretenses* of *One*, whose *Success* must have been accompanied with *Absolute Power*, and the *Ruine* of our *present happy Establishment*; but whose *Attempt* hath by this Time, we hope, sufficiently convinced *Him* of its own *Weakness*. Our *happy Estate* therefore, I have set before your Eyes, that you may the better judge of the *Unhappinesses* of the contrary: which I have likewise shewn as I passed.

passed. But, without these Assurances, you S E R M. may easily imagine to your selves the blessed v. Effects of *French Instructions*, and *French Force*, ~~and~~ and a *Popish Faith*, should any *Future Attempt* prove more successful to this *Pretender*; and judge from former Precedents, how exactly he will answer all his *Obligations*; how sincerely he will promise to maintain the *Church of England*, as by *Law established*, meaning the *Popish Church* established in former *Days*; how inviolably he will preserve your *Laws*, by dispensing with them; how strenuously he will maintain your *Properties*, by esteeming and using them as his own; how glorious he will make the *Union*, by enlarging it to the *Gallican Church*, and *State*; and how indulgent he will be to tender Consciences, by allowing them the *Liberty* of chusing *exquisite Torments*, or the Profession of his own *Religion*. Let Men consider whether this be not the very *State* they are to expect under *Him*; and then, voluntarily chuse it if they can.

This is a *Subject* of great, and universal Importance: And, if it be needful to add any *Apology*, let it be remembered, that it is foreign to no Man's Office, upon all just Occasions, to inculcate such *Doctrines* as promote the Happiness of *human Society*; and particularly not Foreign to ours, to consider a *Subject* to which

*Almighty*

SER M. Almighty God, by his Prophet, so plainly leads v. our Thoughts. But, to conclude, Whatever

Influence the Considerations, I have urged, may have upon some Minds, I hope they may at least animate such as are well-disposed already to follow the noble Example of our First *British Parliament*, in their Approbation of the late Revolution; their Zeal for Her present *Majesty*; their Concern to support the just Title of Herself, and Her *Protestant Successors*; And their Resolution to do all in their Power to maintain the Happinesses we enjoy, and to convey them down unviolated to our Posterity after us.

# SERMON VI.

Preached at the Assizes at *Hertford*, July 26,  
1708.

## ACTS xxii. 25.

*And as they bound him with Thongs, Paul said unto the Centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a Man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?*

**I**T being my Design to speak something at ~~S E R M.~~ this Time concerning the Nature of *Laws*, vi. and the great Advantage of them to the ~~W~~ well-being of *Human Society*, I think it not improper to found what I have to say upon the Behaviour of *St. Paul*, as it is recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*, with respect to his *Civil Privileges*, and to his *Civil Superiors*, and *Judges*. And I chuse to do so, because this will at once give us some Light into the true Interpretation of the *Doctrine* delivered by *himself* and *others* in the *New Testament*, concerning *Government*; and lead us into some useful *Observations*

I. I propose to give you a brief View of the Behaviour of St. Paul, as it is recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*, with Respect to those Civil Rights, and Privileges, to which the Laws of the Roman, or Jewish, State entitled Him; and to those Civil Magistrates, and Judges, before whom He had occasion to appear. And,

1. In the *Chapter* now before us, the chief Captain, who appears to have acted the Part of a Civil Magistrate as well as of a Commanding Officer in *Jerusalem*, resolving to find out what it was that had so much incensed the whole Multitude against St. Paul, commanded him to be scourged, in order to his own Confession of his Crime. St. Paul could have born this Usage with as great *Christian Patience*, and *Roman Fortitude*, as any Man living: And no Man knew the true Glory of suffering wrongfully better than *He*. But, instead of this, He seems to think it a much more becoming Part to insist upon those Civil Privileges which the *Laws* of the *State* entitled him to, as He was free of the City of *Rome*. *Is it lawful for you to scourge a Man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?* Was the Question which He thought fit at that Time to ask.

ask. If a certain Sett of *Notions* had been s E R M. embraced in those *Days*, some of his *Fellow- vi. Christians* might perhaps have informed Him, ~~the~~ that the *Laws* were but a *dead Letter*; that what the *Executive Power* ordained was *Law*, tho' contrary to all the *Laws* then in force; that He who was but a *Subject*, was no proper Judge of his own *Rights*, and ought not to give so ill a Precedent to other *Subjects*, as might encourage them to dare to judge when their *Privileges* were invaded; and much more; that He, being a *Christian*, and an *Apostle*, a Follower of a crucified Master, and a Preacher of the Doctrine of the *Cross*, ought not to shew any Concern about worldly *Rights* and *Privileges*; but think it a Glory rather to give them up to the Invasion of his *Superiors*. Thus, I say, might some *Christians* have taught St. *Paul* to have behaved himself. But *He*, we find, was of another Opinion; and had very different Sentiments concerning these Matters. *He* thought it no Argument of a *Christian* Spirit, to suffer any thing which he could honourably avoid; and *He* thought it honourable to plead the *Privileges* of a *Subject* against the Encroachments of the *Higher Powers*: And so *He* appeals to the *Laws*, and claims the *Right* of being used by the *Executive Power*, no otherwise than as they direct.

SERM. 2. If we follow him a little farther, we  
VI. shall find *Him*, in the next *Chapter*, brought,  
by Order of the same *Chief Captain*, before the  
*Chief Priests*, and *Council* of the *Jews*, to see  
how he could acquit himself to *Them*. Upon  
his declaring his Sincerity, and Uprightness,  
the High-priest *Ananias* commanded them that  
*stood by, to smite Him on the Mouth.* St. Paul's  
Reply was very severe, *God shall smite thee,*  
*thou whited Wall: For sittest thou there to judge*  
*me after the Law, and commandest me to be*  
*smitten contrary to the Law?* ver. 3. And tho'  
He afterwards repented of the reproachful  
Word he gave the *High-priest* in his Anger;  
yet he repented not of the just Sense he had,  
of the illegal Indignity offered him; or of  
his Zeal against all such *Magistrates* as acted  
against the *End* of their *Office*, and against  
those *Laws* by which they ought to be govern-  
ed in the *Execution* of it. Here again it is  
evident, that this great *Apostle* had the *Spirit* of  
*Liberty* in him; and thought that those *Laws*  
which were made for the Security and Guard  
of it, were not to be dispensed with, at the  
Pleasure of those whose Business it was to exe-  
cute them. Here again we find him pretend-  
ing to know, and judge of, his own *Civil Pri-*  
*vileges*; and not tamely submitting to the Vio-  
lation of them. If some *Christians* of later  
Ages

Ages had lived in his Time, and been Witnesses of this, they would not only have said, *Revilest thou God's High-priest?* but would have asked him, how He, being a *Subject*, and a *Christian*, could answer to his own Conscience, his thinking any *Subjects* fit *Judges* of the Invasion of their own *Privileges*? They would have reprehended him severely for placing himself above his *Judges*, and turning the World upside down; for making *Subjects Rulers*, and *Rulers Subjects*, as they love to speak, by this preposterous Way of pleading his *Privileges*, even whilst he stood before a *Court of Judicature*. But it is very plain, that, as no Man was more zealous for the Honour and Veneration of such *Magistrates* as answer the *Ends* of their *Office*, which is the *Good of Human Society*: so no Man could express a more hearty Dislike of those who acted a contrary Part; or a greater Concern for the Temporal good Estate of *Subjects*, even amidst his continual Labours and *Cares* for the Eternal Happiness of all Men. Once more,

3. If we look back as far as the xvi<sup>th</sup> *Chap.* we shall find a yet greater Proof of this. The *Magistrates* of *Philippi* commanded *Paul* and *Silas* to be beaten with many *Stripes*, and cast into *Prison*, ver. 23. but the next Morning sent to the *Keeper* of the *Prison* to let them go,

S E R M. ver. 35. St. Paul's Answer is very observable,  
vi. *They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being*  
*Romans, and have cast us into Prison: And now*  
*do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily, but*  
*let them come themselves and fetch us out.* He  
was just now delivered out of Prison by a  
wonderful Shock of the Earth about it; and  
so might have escaped before this Release was  
brought from the *Magistrates*: But after such  
a good-natured Message from them, one would  
think, He might have quietly departed. It  
would have been but the Compliance of a  
*Subject* with a lawful Request of his *Superiors*.  
Yet this great *Apostle* did not think it honourable  
to go away, without expressing some Re-  
sentment against the Invasion of the *Privileges*  
of the *Subject*, which the *Magistrates* had been  
guilty of; and without pleading the Cause of  
*injured Inferiors*. He continues resolute till  
these *Magistrates* themselves had waited upon  
him, and *desired him to depart out of the City*,  
ver. 39. And here again, How would some,  
who pretend to found their Notions of these  
Matters upon this very *Apostle*, have reprehen-  
ded any other Man in the same Circumstances?  
Ansverest thou the *Vicegerents of God* so?  
Where is the profound Respect due to that  
*Order* instituted by *God himself*? Where is the  
Sense of the Duty of *Subjects*? Nay, where  
is

is Government itself, if Subjects may be allowed to ~~be~~ judge of the Invasion of their own Privileges; if Laws must be placed above the Determinations of the Executive Power? But above all, where can there be a Stop, when Obedience is refused to a lawful Injunction of the Magistrate, and to what might without Sin be complied with? Whom therefore shall we follow? Those who speak after this manner, or St. Paul; who knew, as well as they, the Duty owing to Magistrates, and yet gave not up his own Judgment to them? But tho' a Subject, and acting the Part of a Subject, took upon him (by what these Persons might perhaps call a stubborn Behaviour) to bring the Magistrates themselves to a Sense of that Invasion they had made upon the Rights and Privileges of Roman Subjects; and this, tho' the Invasion appears to have been made merely through an hasty Mistake. Of so great Consequence did He think it to oppose one single Instance of *illegal Oppression*!

Thus have I given you a true Account of the most remarkable Passages recorded concerning St. Paul's Behaviour, with Respect to his Civil Privileges; and to those Magistrates, before whom he had occasion to appear. If any one say, that all this relates only to Deputed, or Inferior Magistrates, not to the Su-

S E R M. *preme*: I answer that it cannot relate to *one* without relating to the *other*, because *Government* cannot be managed in the *World* but by *Deputed* and *Inferior Officers*; because the *Christian Religion* (as St. Peter testifieth) commands the *Obedience* required in it, with *Respect* to both; because otherwise, the Argument urged by some for the *Magistrate's* uncontrollable *Authority*, drawn from our *Lord's* acknowledging the *Power* of *Pilate* to be from *Above*, who was but a *Deputed Governor*, must fall to the *Ground*; because both *Supreme* and *Inferior* are said, by many, to act as *one Authority*, by the same *Divine Commission*; and so are equally borne out by it against all *Opposition*, or at least equally elevated above all *Pretenses* of *Subjects* to judge concerning their *Conduct*: And because it is as impossible, according to the Reasoning of some Men, to oppose in any Instance the *lowest Officer* in *Authority*, without opposing the *Supreme*; as it is said to be, to oppose the *Supreme*, without opposing *God* himself, whose *Vice-gerent* he is. I proceed, in the *second Place*,

II. To consider if this *Account* of St. *Paul's Behaviour* will not give us Light into the true Interpretation of the *Doctrine* delivered by *Himself*, and *others*, in the *New Testament*, concerning

concerning *Government*; and lead us to some ~~S E R M.~~  
Observations of Importance to *Governed Societies* vi.  
and to *that* in particular to which we be- ~~long~~  
long. For can any one think that these  
*Passages* were recorded for nothing, but to  
serve for an *Embellishment* of St. *Paul's Story*?  
Or can any one think, that St. *Paul* had a re-  
gard to his own particular worldly Interest in  
these Parts of his *Conduct*? *He*, that had suf-  
fered, and knew he was to suffer, much  
greater Hardships? *He*, that was ready to give  
up his Life for the sake of *Christianity*, and to  
follow his Master through all Indignities,  
and all Persecutions, when the Glory of *God*  
should call him to it? No, it was something  
more than his own Part in this World which  
engaged him to shew himself after this man-  
ner; for *this* he could with the greatest Ease  
have neglected. But the Happiness of *Hu-  
man Society*, and the good Estate of the *Infe-  
rior Part* of Mankind, moved his Soul to a  
generous Indignation against every thing in  
*Government* which favoured of *Tyranny*; and  
kindled in his Breast a Zeal for every thing  
which it was fit for *Subjects* to enjoy. Let us  
therefore see, if his *Behaviour* will not lead us  
to some useful, and important Thoughts, rela-  
ting to *Christians* incorporated in *Civil Societies*.

S E R M. 1. I need not take particular Notice that St. vi. *Paul* thought it not beneath a *Christian*, and ~~an~~ an *Apostle*, to concern himself with his *Rights* and *Privileges*, as He was a *Subject* of the *Roman State*. He knew, as well as any since his Time, that he belonged to a City above, whose Builder is *God*; He knew that his chief Concern was *Eternity* and *Heaven*; He knew that no *Tyrannical Magistrate* could rob him of his Innocence, or of his Salvation: And yet he considered himself likewise as a Member of *Human Society*, and acted the Part of one who had a just Sense of the *Privileges* of his *Citizenship* here on Earth, as well as of that *Citizenship* in *Heaven*, which he speaks of to the *Philippians*, and *Ephesians*. And why should it be thought unworthy of any other *Preachers* of the *Gospel*, to imitate so great an Example, in the same great Concern for the Good of *Human Society*? To proceed,

2. Let St. *Paul* himself answer all those who have on his Authority pretended to exalt the *Executive Power* above all *Laws*; and above the very *Ends* of that *Office* for which they were instituted. *He*, it is plain, knew nothing of this: Nor did he carry the Obligation of a *quiet Submission* to any such Instances as were contrary to the *Design* of that *Office*.

Let

Let them learn from himself, that when he S E R M. speaks highly of *Magistrates*, it is of such who VI. are *Gods* indeed in *Human Society*; such as ~~~ maintain the Character and Dignity of their Station, by answering the Ends of it; and that when they descend to invade the *Privileges* they were ordained to guard, He knew no such profound Respect to be due to them. Let them learn from *Him*, that the *Laws* of the *Roman State* were above the *Executive Power*; and that mere Authority of the *Magistrate* could not make That to be *Law*, which was against the *written Laws*; or oblige *Him* to comply with what was injurious to his *Civil Privileges*: and consequently, that he understood not his *Master's* *Doctrine* concerning the Governors of this World, to be destructive of the *Privileges* and Happiness of the *governed Society*; and that he himself, in his own *Doctrine*, delivered in other Places, meant nothing contrary to these. Let them learn from his *Practice*, which is certainly the *best Interpreter* of his own *Doctrine*, and that of his *Master* and *Fellow-Apostles*, that when *He* saith, *there is no Power but of God, the Powers that be are ordained of God*; and that when his great *Master* acknowledges the Power of *Pilate* to be from Above, no more could be meant, than that it was agreeable to *God's Will* that some Persons

S E R M. Persons should be invested with *Power* for the  
 VI. good of *Human Society* : but not that *God* had  
 made them uncontrollable in acting against his  
*Commission*, and to the Ruine of their *Fellow-  
 Creatures*. And let them remember, that when  
 St. *Paul* commanded Respect, and forbade *Op-  
 position* to the *Higher Powers* ; and that when  
 St. *Peter* commanded the same Subjection both  
 to the *Supreme* and *Deputed Magistrates* ; They  
 were considered as acting the best Part in the  
 World ; and nothing intended by this to oblige  
 Subjects to a *Quiet Submission* to such illegal and  
 unjust *Conduct*, as affects and shakes the *Uni-  
 versal Happiness*. And,

3. If they still repeat the old *Question*, Who  
 shall judge of the *Invasion of Privileges*? Let  
 the same St. *Paul* answer them, who, in the  
 Capacity of a *Subject*, more than once is record-  
 ed (in the short *History* we have of his Actions)  
 to have presumed to judge concerning his own  
*Privileges*, against the Invasion of the *Magis-  
 trate* ; and to have done this, as by a *Right* be-  
 longing to every Member of the same *Society*.  
 His *Christianity* did not make him forget that  
 he was a *Roman* : And as a *Roman*, he judged  
 that he had the *Privileges* of a *Roman* : And  
 that his *Christianity* did not oblige him to give up  
 these to any *Mortal*, as long as He could with  
 Honour keep them. The Possibility of his  
 mistaking

mistaking in this, in which he acted not as an *S E R M.* *Apostle*, was no Argument to him against this *VI.* Right: Nor did the Weakness of other Men's Judgments prevail with him not to set them an Example of *judging* in the like Circumstances. What Confusion, what Disorder, say some, must ensue, if *Subjects* be allowed to judge concerning the Invasion of their own *Rights* and *Privileges*? But let them believe St. *Paul* for once, that much more Misery must ensue upon *Human Society*, if it be a settled Point that the *Executive Powers* may absolutely, and without Controll, determine what they please concerning the *inferior* Part of the World. If any one ask where he saith this, I answer, his Behaviour speaks it aloud: for he never would have acted the Part which He did, could he have thought it more for *Public Good*, that *Subjects* should give up all their Judgments to the Determination of their *Magistrates*, than that they should judge concerning the Violation of their common *Rights* after the best manner they could. Let not Men therefore forget *Modesty* so much as to laugh out of Countenance this Right of judging in *Subjects*, which St. *Paul* himself claimed merely as he was a *Subject*.

4. Let those learn it from St. *Paul*, who will not bear it from others, that *Rights* and *Privileges*,

SER M. vileges, *Liberty* and *Property*, and the like, VI. are not *Words* fitted only to raise the Spirits of the *People*, and to foment Disturbances in *Society*; but that they are *Things* worth contending for. Some may think (unless Respect to an *Apostle* a little divert them from it) what great Matter if St. *Paul* had born a little *Scourging*? Or why could not he pass over the Injuries offered him by his *Governors*? To which I know no better Answer than this, that his Behaviour was what it was, merely because they were *Magistrates*; i. e. because it was a Case not of Concern to *Himself* only, but to *Human Society*. For he could bear, and pass by, Injuries as well as any Man: and had they been private Persons who had offered him any as great Indignities, I doubt not, He would have borne them without any Return but that of Forgiveness. But when the *Civil Privileges* of that *Society* to which he belonged, were invaded by Those, whose Duty and Profession it was to maintain them, He thought it a just Occasion to shew his Sense of so great an *Evil*; tho' it immediately touched only himself. The Consideration of the *Character* and *Office* of Those who offered the Injuries, was so far from determining him to pass them over with *Silence*; (according to some Mens way of arguing) that it was the very thing that made him look upon

upon them not as private Injuries ; but with a ~~S E R M.~~ Resentment due to Injuries of a *publick* and ~~uni-~~ VI.  
~~versal Concern.~~ And however some may ridicule the *Liberties* of *Subjects* ; St. Paul \* , it is plain, was for standing *fast*, not only in the *Liberty* with which *Christ* had made him free from the *Jewish Law* of *Ceremonies* ; but also in that *Liberty* with which the *Laws of Nature*, and of the *Roman State*, had made him free from Oppression and *Tyranny*. For,

5. It is another Observation which we may make from his *Example*, that He thought the *End* of written *Laws* to be the *Security* of the *Subject* against any Arbitrary Proceedings of the *Executive Power* ; and that This could not be, unless the *Executive* were governed by these *Laws*, as well as the *Subject*. If this had not been his Opinion ; it had been frivolous for him to have urged his *Privileges* founded upon the *Laws* : by urging of which he plainly implies, that they were the *Measure* of the *Magistrate's* Behaviour toward the *Subject*. And I hope, it is the same in all the like *Establishments*. But how contrary is this to the *Maxims* of Some, who make the *Laws* insignificant Trifles ; and place the *Will* of the *Executive Power* above them : declaring that otherwise there can be no such thing as *Government* ? By which Word they

\* *Gal. v. 1.*

generally

SE R M. generally seem to understand something beyond  
VI. such a *Government* as is for the good of the go-  
verned Society. How contrary is this to Such  
as make written *Laws* only an Encroachment  
upon the *Absolute Power* instituted by *God*; and  
study to make their *Power* as contemptible as  
they can, that the Necessity of *Absolute Mo-*  
*narchy* may the better appear; and boast of  
their Services this way, as if they were of the  
greatest Importance? If these Notions be em-  
braced, what must be thought of St. *Paul* un-  
der the *Roman State*, who thought it his Hap-  
piness to have *Rights* and *Privileges* settled by  
written *Laws*? What must we think of the  
wisest *Nations* in former Times, who could de-  
vise no greater Security, against *Oppression* and  
Unhappiness in *Societies*, than *Laws*? And if  
we come home to our selves, What must we think of  
the envied *Constitution* under which we  
live; and, by the Virtue and Power of *Laws*,  
all enjoy the chief Happinesses that Human  
Life can wish for? What must we think of  
that *Revolution* in which *High* and *Low* so un-  
animously joined, chiefly to rescue our *Laws*  
from a *Dispensing Power*; and to divest the  
*Executive* from all Pretenses to a Superiority  
over the *Legislative*? And what must we think  
of those *Magistrates*, whom the present Age  
beholds with Veneration, and Ages to come

will remember with Eternal Honour; who, <sup>S E R M.</sup> tho' commissioned by the *Supreme Executive Power*, yet acknowledge no Rule of their Conduct but what is prescribed to them by the *Legislative*; and account it their chief Glory, to be the Guardians of the *Laws*, as *They* are of the *Liberties* of the *People*?

The judicious Mr. *Hooker* \* thinks that *Human Societies* first made a Trial of *Government* by the Will of one Man; (as their *first Essay* might well be the worst and most imperfect;) and that *They* were constrained to come to *Laws* as a Remedy against the *Evils* of that kind of *Regimen*, after they had found (as 'his Expression is) *That to live by one Man's Will was the Cause of all Men's Misery*. This agrees with *St. Paul*, who plainly thought that *Laws* were designed as a Curb to the *Arbitrary Will* of the *Executive Power*. But invain did He contend in his Days; invain have the wisest of Men discoursed in all Ages; and invain is *Absolute Power* controlled by Success of Arms in our own Times; if we can live to be persuaded, either that there is no Difference in *Governments*; or that there is no Guard in *Laws* against *Arbitrary Power*; nor any Force in them but what must bend to the Will of those whose *Office* it

\* *Eccles. Polity*, Book I. § 10.

SER M. is to execute and defend them. A lasting *Li-*  
*VI.* *berty* is founded upon *Laws*; and is the result  
of a good *Constitution of Government*, as *Health*  
is of a right *Constitution of Body*. In this also  
like *Health*; that it is valued most by Those who  
who have known the Taste of it, under the first  
Apprehension, or Sense, of the want of it; but  
little prized by thoughtless Men, under a se-  
cure and unshaken Enjoyment: whilst *Slave-*  
*ry*, like *Sickness*, to Those who never tasted it,  
seems nothing; and to Those who have been  
oppressed long enough to forget what *Liberty*  
is, becomes the more tolerable, as a Bodily  
*Indisposition* doth to such as know not, or des-  
pair of, a better State. But is it not very un-  
accountable, that *Blessings* should be underval-  
ued by weak Men, for that Security which  
should recommend them; nay, that *Curses*  
should be invited down from *Heaven* in the  
room of them? That, when the Inconvenien-  
ces of *Absolute Monarchy* made Men first fly  
to *Laws* for Refuge, they should ever fly back  
again from what they must acknowledge their  
Happiness; and call for that *Absolute Power* to  
dispense with these *Laws*, which these *Laws*  
were purposely designed, and instituted, to  
controll and confine. But thus it is even at  
this Day, after the Experience of so many  
Ages; even amongst our selves, after so grate-  
ful

ful and pleasing a Taste of the Blessings of a S E R M. Legal Constitution; even under the most uncorrupt, unblameable Administration of *Justice* ~~and~~ ~~and~~ ~~and~~ and *Equity*, that ever any Nation was blessed with. But, to return,

6. St. *Paul's* Behaviour should, methinks, upon second Consideration, make some Persons a little more cautious of affirming *Absolute Monarchy*, invested with a Power above all the Encroachments of written *Laws*, to be the only Form agreeable to the *Will of God*; nay, if you can hear it without smiling, the most beneficial to the *Subject*. For let any one tell me, whether upon this Principle it had not been the *Duty* of St. *Paul* to have taken the Opportunity offered him of owning the superior Power of the *Magistrate*; of acknowledging the little use of *Laws* to *Human Society*; and of shewing the *Christian Religion* to be a great Friend, tho' not to the *lawless Confusion* of the Multitude, yet to the *lawless Power* of the *Magistrate*. This had been a noble piece of Service, not only to *Truth*, but to *Human Society*; according to some: And I presume St. *Paul* knew the *Will*, and the plain *Revelation*, of *God*, as well at least as any *Modern Christian*; and would gladly have suffered a few *Stripes*, in order to bear Testimony to so important a Part of *God's Law*. Nor need He

SE R M. have doubted this way to have turned the An-  
VI. ger of the *Magistrates* into Favour, and a kind  
Regard both to himself, and his Profession. But  
He appears to have been a Stranger to all this :  
And his Zeal for the *Laws* shews that He  
thought both the Will of God, and the Good  
of Society, to require another Scheme than  
that of an *Unlimited Executive Power*.

Thus have I laid before you a true Account  
of the *Behaviour* and *Notions* of that *Apostle*,  
in favour of the *Rights of Subjects*, who hath  
been long, and often, represented by many, as  
the greatest Afferter of an *unlimited Authority*  
in the *Executive Power*. And tho' I have  
been treating of *Civil* and *Secular* Concerns,  
yet, I hope, I may be safe under the Patronage  
of St. *Paul's* Example, and of those *Scriptures*  
which gave us this Account of his *Conduct* and  
*Behaviour*, as of something not unuseful to *Men*  
and *Christians*. Nor is it a small Satisfaction  
to speak upon this *Subject* before those who  
understand the *Value* and *Importance* of *whole-  
some Laws*; and know how to scorn all the  
Homage or Respect of Men, but what results  
from an unbiassed, and uninterrupted, Admini-  
stration of *Justice*.

And now, if St. *Paul* shewed so great a  
Respect to the written *Laws* of that *State* un-  
der which He lived ; if *He* thought it worth  
his

his while (whose grand Affair was to propagate a *New Religion*, and the Belief of a *Future State*) to concern himself so much with this World, as to insist upon his *Rights* and *Privileges*, as *He* was a *Subject*, and to shew no ordinary Regard to them ; if *He* thought it the Happiness of a Kingdom to have such *Privileges* as are fit for *Subjects*, settled by *Law*, and an Happiness not to be shaken at the *Will* of the *Executive Power* ; if *He* thought that *Subjects* might judge concerning the Invasion of the *Privileges*, and were not brought into Being to submit to every thing imposed upon them : Let us learn from so great an Example, to value our own Happiness in that *Legal Establishment* under which we live, and live so as to enjoy Life. *His Example* bids us plainly stand fast in our *Liberty* supported by *Laws*. Let this move us more than the fallacious Disputations of Those who are continually declaiming against this Happiness, and endeavouring to persuade us to change it for another sort of *Government* ; arguing the *Benefit* of this to ourselves, and the *Right* of it in others. And, lest we should not be moved to a Change, the Argument is sometimes turned ; and we are to be informed that our whole Notion of *Liberty*, is a mistaken *Chimera*, and *Nonsense* : That,

S E R M. whereas we think that we have *Laws* to govern  
VI. us, it is only the *Will* of the *Executive* which  
rules ; that, whereas we think these *Laws* are  
made by the *Consent* and *Authority* of the  
*Representatives* of the *People*, it is no such  
thing ; that it is the *Prince* only who *Enacts* ;  
that no others have any share in the *Legisla-  
ture* ; that it hath *all the Treason possible in it*,  
to say that the *Parliament* hath a *co-ordinate  
Power* in *Legislation* ; that our *Constitution* ab-  
hors *co-ordinate Legislative Powers* ; that our  
*Constitution* is one *Sovereign*, whose *Supremacy*  
is *indivisible*, and both the *Legislative* and  
*Executive* are in it, notwithstanding that all  
our *Laws* are said to be *enacted* not only by  
the *Prince*, but by the *Authority* of the *Lords*  
and *Commons*, in the same Sentence ; and con-  
sequently, that the *Executive*, being the only  
*Legislative*, can dispense, annul, destroy *Laws*  
as it pleaseth ; that the *People*, without Di-  
stinction, are the *Sons of Belial*, a Company  
of *Vassals*, that live and subsist by the *Concession*  
of their *Master* only, and the like. Positions,  
which I would not mention, but that they  
are exposed to Light, and propagated with  
Heat, every Day : Tho' I hope not with such  
Force, as to disengage our Affections from  
an Happiness, without which, I know not  
whether it had not been as well for us to

have been born to a Wilderness and a Den.

SERM.

As *Laws* therefore, have turned the *Desert* VI.  
of this *World* into a *Paradise*, and the Wild-  
ness of Mankind into *Human Society*; so,  
let us of this *Kingdom* acknowledge our Part  
in this Happiness to be much above that of  
others; and let our *Zeal* for it rise in Pro-  
portion to the Value of the Thing itself. Let  
our *Government* by *Laws* be the chief Object  
of our *Worldly Concern*; and as we value that,  
let our Value, and Estimation, rise for the *Su-*  
*preme Head*, and every Branch of the *Execu-*  
*tive Power*, under which we live so happy  
and easy at Home, whilst they all join in ma-  
king the *Laws* the Measure of their whole  
*Administration*. But above all, let our  
Thankfulness at this Time rise to the great  
*Disposer* of all Events, who hath given us a  
farther Prospect of the Continuance of the  
same Happiness to future Generations, by a  
great and important Victory Abroad, in which  
*Justice*, *Laws*, and *Liberty*, have triumphed  
over *Injustice*, and *Arbitrary Power*; and  
which we may reasonably look upon as a  
growing Security of our good Estate, against  
the Designs and Attempts of all who fight  
against it, both at Home and Abroad: Which  
*God* grant it may be, for the Sake of *Jesus*  
*Christ*, &c.

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*Concerning impartial Enquiry in Religion: and  
the two Extremes of implicit Subjection and  
Infidelity.*

## SERMON VII.

Preached at St. Peter's Poor, in Jan. 1712-13.

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I THESS. V. 21.

*Prove all Things: hold fast that which is good.*

S E R M. **T**H E R E is no greater Sign of the sincere  
vii. Intentions, and generous Design, of  
the first Preachers of the Gospel, than  
those frequent Appeals, which we meet with,  
in their Preaching and their Writings, to the  
Evidences and Supports of that Religion, which  
they preached to the World. It shews that  
they neither knew, nor suspected, any thing  
like a Cheat, in it: It shews both that they  
thought it true, as well as important; and that  
no Enquiry or Examination of any impartial  
Man could do it a Prejudice. When they  
preached to the Jews, who were to be convinc-  
ed, in great part, by their former Notions, as  
far

far as they were grounded upon former Pro-  
phecies; we find that they of *Berœa* were highly  
commended for searching the *Old Testament*, *~~~*  
to see whether what the *Apostles* reported from  
thence, were true; and that their *Enquiring  
Temper* was esteemed an Instance of a generous,  
well-born Soul. They of *Berœa*, saith the Au-  
thor of the *Acts* of the *Apostles*, Chap. xvii. v.  
11. were *more noble*, *i. e.* of a better Make and  
Disposition of Mind, than some others. They  
were, as the Word imports, of too *generous*  
and *well-tempered* a Spirit, either to embrace  
blindly what was proposed to them; or to reject  
it as blindly without farther Enquiry. St. *Paul*,  
in his Speech before *Agrippa*, makes the same  
Appeal to the *Prophets*, *Acts* xxvi. 27. which  
implied in it the same Desire that the Matter  
should be determined by an *Impartial Enquiry*  
into them. When He preached to the *Gentiles*,  
who had the natural Light of Reason to direct  
them in their Searches, He did not appeal to  
those *Prophets*, of which they knew nothing;  
but to a Matter of Fact, into which they  
might enquire. Nor doth he expect them to  
believe that God shall judge the World, upon  
his own Word: but only as they should find  
it true, that he had given Proof of it, by  
raising *Jesus Christ* from the Dead. *Acts* xvii.  
31.

S E R M. When *Christians* increased; and many Pre-  
 VII. tenders to mighty spiritual Gifts appeared  
 amongst them, some of which were *Deceivers*  
 and *Impostors*; the same St. *Paul* requires it of  
*Christians* in the *Text*, to *prove all things* that  
 come to them, under the Notion of *Divine* and  
*Spiritual*; which he could not do with any De-  
 cency; unless it were so, that the *Christian Re-*  
*ligion* itself desired and invited all Men to exa-  
 mine into the Proofs upon which it stood.  
 St. *John* requires the same of *Christians*, to *try*  
*the Spirits*, i. e. to examine all Pretenses to Mi-  
 racles; and supernatural Revelation: and to  
 receive, or reject, them accordingly, 1 *John*  
 iv. 1. St *Peter* is likewise very express, even  
 with respect to *Christianity* itself; that *Christi-*  
*ans* should be *always ready to give an Answer* of the  
*Hope* that is in them, 1 *Pet.* iii. 15. which  
 supposed that their Religion and their Faith in  
*Christ* are built upon the best Evidence; and  
 that their Faith was not required of them, but  
 upon that Evidence; and that it is their Duty  
 to enquire into, and remember, those Grounds  
 upon which their *Hope* is built. And this  
 whole Conduct was agreeable to that of their  
 Master, our *Blessed Lord* himself: who con-  
 stantly called upon those about him to examine  
 into his Works; to try him whether he were  
 from

from God or not; and who declared, that the ~~S E R M.~~ <sup>vii.</sup> Guilt of those who rejected Him, consisted in their rejecting that Evidence He brought along with Him, and those Proofs which he gave of his Divine Commission. Neither did He, nor any of his *Apostles*, (as far as we have any Accounts of what they either said, or did,) ever require of any Men to believe in Him, upon his own Authority or Assertion: or upon any Ground, separate from that which I have now mentioned; I mean, the Evidences, and *Proofs* which He gave of the Truth of his Pretensions.

Now it is very observable, that there are *Two Extremes*, which Men have run into, with respect to this Matter. The *one* is, that of those Professed *Christians*, who, contrary to the whole Conduct of their Master, and his *Apostles*, require the Assent of their Inferiors to every thing which they please to define and settle; as to a thing dictated by God himself: and this under the Notion of Authority and Infallibility; without allowing any Questions, or Enquiries, about it. The other is the *Extreme* of those who, under Pretense of Examination, but, without the Reality of the thing, explode all Belief in *Jesus Christ*; and recommend Infidelity to the Minds of Men. In the middle, between these *Two Extremes*, is that happy Temper

S E R M. Temper of Mind, which renders Men impartial : which is equally an Enemy to that *Spiritual Tyranny*, which commands and terrifies Mankind into an open Profession of any thing ; and to that partial and unequal *Bias*, which makes Men catch at any Trifle, and set up any little Objection, as of force enough against those moral Evidences, and plain Proofs, upon which the Truth of the *Gospel* relies.

In speaking farther, therefore, upon the *Words*, I have now chose, I shall be naturally led to these *Three Particulars* :

I. To make some just *Observations*, relating to that Impartial *Enquiry* and *Examination*, spoken of in the *Text*.

II. To consider the unreasonable Proceedings of *Those*, who are in either of the *Two Extremes*, I have just now mentioned. And,

III. To draw some useful and important *Observations*, from what I shall have said.

I. I shall endeavour to make some just and useful *Observations* relating to that *Enquiry* and *Examination*, spoken of in the *Text* : and this, under these *Three Heads*.

1. The great Advantage, and Necessity, of *Enquiry* and *Examination*, into what we are, in

in an extraordinary Manner, called upon to embrace, as *Religion*, and the Will of God.

VII.

2. The Temper of Mind, absolutely necessary to this *Enquiry*: without which, we can neither embrace, nor reject, any thing proposed to us, with Justice, or Innocence. And,

3. The *Subject* of this *Enquiry*, with respect to the Offers made to us in that *Religion*, in which we have been educated.

1. I say, The great Advantage, and Necessity, of *Enquiry* and *Examination* into what we are, in an extraordinary Manner, called upon to embrace, as *Religion*, and the Will of God.

That *Almighty God* hath a Right to call upon his Reasonable Creatures in any Method, which may seem best to his Wisdom, cannot be denied. That it may *possibly* seem best to his Wisdom, to call upon them, by a *Person* sent into the World, and commisioned, in an extraordinary Manner, must be granted by all, who believe the Existence of any such *Being* in the Universe. That it is not only barely *possible*, but *probable*, that he would do so; is what will easily be assented to, by any who know the *Nature* of *God*, and consider the State of Man in this World. But, let us put it as low as possible. The bare *Possibility* of the Thing, is enough to shew us our Interest, and Duty, in this Case: Because it is always

STER M. the Interest, and *Duty of Reasonable Creatures*,  
vii. to act as such.

The Advantage and Necessity, therefore, of this *Enquiry* we are speaking of, is the *Reasonableness* of it. And the *Reasonableness* of it lies upon this, that it is at least *possible*, that Almighty God may call upon his Reasonable Creatures, in an extraordinary Manner ; that, if he should so call upon them, it is of the utmost Importance to them to regard his Call : that therefore it behoves them to attend to what comes to them in a very extraordinary Manner, under that Appearance and Profession : that it is their Interest, as well as their Duty ; that *Gratitude*, as well as other Obligations, draws them to this ; that, without it, they may possibly lose the greatest Opportunity of being made happy in the Favour of God ; that from it they cannot possibly receive any Harm or Detriment either to Soul or Body ; but that they will certainly receive at least the Reward of a good Disposition, and reasonable Temper of Mind. From all which, I say, follows the great *Reasonableness*, that is, to Reasonable Creatures, the great Necessity and Advantage, of *enquiring* into what is proposed to them, in a very uncommon, and a very extraordinary Manner, as a Message from the *Great God*, whose Creatures they are ; and Creatures, endowed by Him

Him with that Reason, which constantly di- s E R M.  
rects Them to follow the safe and secure Me- VII.  
thod of Acting. This being premised, I come ~~now~~  
now,

2. To speak of the *Temper* and *Disposition* of Mind which is necessary to all Persons, who would behave themselves, in this Affair of *Examination* and *Enquiry*, after a Manner acceptable to God. And this, I think, in one word, must be a *Disposition* of Mind, removed, on one side, from *Credulity*, or a foolish Readiness to believe every strange thing that offers itself: and, on the other side, from those outward Vices; or that inward and unreasonable *Bias*, which are as so many Chains and Fetters upon the judging Faculties of a Man.

1. I say, It must be a *Temper* of Mind, removed from what we call *Credulity*; or a Readiness to believe every uncommon and strange thing, that offers itself, to be really what it pretends to be. This *Credulous Disposition* cannot be suitable to a *Reasonable Creature*: because it is so well known that many have been, and many more may be, the *Cheats* put upon a credulous World, by Men fitted for that Purpose: Reason hath some certain Maxims to appeal to, in judging: and these are all invain, unless they are regarded by an Enquirer. Invain is it, that we know the Nature

SERM. Nature of *Almighty God*, if we must not examine, whether what professeth to come from ~~the~~ Him, be worthy of Him. Invain is it, that we know *Virtue*, and *Vice*, to be direct Opposites; the *one*, the *Happiness*, the other, the *Misery*, of understanding Natures; if we must not consider whether the encouraging Vice, or the discouraging Virtue, be not a sufficient Reason for rejecting any Proposal made to us. Invain do we speak of *Truth*, and *Falshood*; or of the Differences of things; if all things be alike to us: and We swallow every thing that offers, without Distinction or Difference. *True*, and *False*, are, indeed, but *Mock-sounds* to a Man that believes every thing equally, that any Man, or any sort of Men, will put upon him for *Divine*. And if such an one pretends to enter into an *Enquiry*; it is only a Search after something to fill his Head with. It is not an *Enquiry* into what is built upon good grounds; or what not: but only a seeking after a little present Food for his Credulity.

Nor can this Temper of Mind be any more acceptable to *God*; than it is agreeable to the Nature of *Man*. For, tho' a Person of this Disposition will believe what comes from *Him*, and receive it as such: yet, this will be by Chance, and not by Reason and Evidence. This will be, because he is disposed and resolved,

to

to believe every thing: not because he finds ~~S E R M.~~ this more reasonable, or more accompanied ~~vii.~~ with Evidence, than the most monstrous ~~Ab-~~ Absurdities, or greatest Falshoods, imaginable. And then, this same *Temper* of Mind will lead the Man to believe the grossest Absurdities of Almighty God himself; and to embrace every Pretender with a Zeal equal to that which he shews for the Person who brings the justest Credentials, and the plainest Characters of Gods Mission, along with him. Now, what Thanks, or Praise, can be due to such an *Enquirer*; with whom all will be *Equal*? unless perhaps, which is often seen, the more unaccountable, or the more absurd and monstrous any thing is, the more fond and tenacious will he be, of it. The Result of such a Man's pretended *Enquiries*, is not what can be called *Faith*; which is a *Virtue*, as it is worked by due Means, and as it is the Consequence of our attending to proper Evidence: but rather *Superstition*, prompted either by *Fear*, or *Folly*, to take all *Pretenses* equally for *Truth*; all *Uncommon things* equally for *Miracles* wrought by God; all *Appearances* equally for *Realities*. This is such a Submission of *Reason* and *Understanding*, below the Dignity of Human Nature, as They only want to be exercised, who have nothing to shew that can bear an *Enquiry*, or stand the   
Test

SERM. Test of an *Impartial Examiner* : but such an  
 vii. one, as cannot be required by Almighty God,  
 who expects that we should distinguish His  
*Truths* from the *Falshoods* of Men ; and make  
 a Difference between His Works, and those  
 which are not so ; and receive, with Discretion,  
 as well as Humility, what He saith ; discern-  
 ing between *Tricks*, and *Great Works* ; be-  
 tween the Person who truly bears his *Charac-  
 ter*, and him who only pretends to do so.  
 But,

2. On the other side, the *Temper* of an *En-  
 quirer* into any Offers made to Mankind, in a  
 very extraordinary Manner, in the Name of God,  
 must be likewise far removed from those *Out-  
 ward Vices* ; or that *Inward Pride*, and Un-  
 reasonable *Bias* ; which are as so many *Chains*  
 and *Fetters* upon the judging Faculties of a  
 Man.

I here mention, not only those notorious o-  
 pen *Vices*, which will often blind a Man's Eyes ;  
 and make him reject whatever contradicts or  
 condemns them ; but also those more secret Sen-  
 timents of Pride, or Prejudice ; Resentment or  
 Revenge ; which have often proved as strong  
 Bars against receiving Truth, as the Prosecution  
 of sensual Pleasure ; or the greatest Covetous-  
 ness, or Ambition, or Worldly-mindedness.  
 And I mention these particularly, because there  
 have

have been Instances, even in these later ~~SE R M.~~<sup>VII.</sup> knowing Ages, of Men, who, merely out of an inward *Pride*, or *Resentment* against others, have denied the Evidences, even of *Mathematical Knowledge* it self; and rejected it, either in whole, or in part, because it hath brought some Shame upon themselves, and their own Understandings. It is really true, and what shews the Corruption of Human Nature, that Light shall be Darkness; that *Four* shall be more than *Six*; or any thing like to these shall be affirmed; nay, and pretended to be proved; by Men, who have *Pride*, or *Resentment*, or *Indignation*, working within. So that it is not enough to say, that a Man is not what we call commonly grossly *vicious* and *immoral*, in the way of *Pleasure*, or *Worldly-mindedness*, to prove him to be *impartial*, and free from Bias. For *Pride*, and *Revenge*, are Immoralities within; which bend the Mind as strongly as any other *Vices* in the World. *Personal Prejudice* will often put a Bias upon it, as powerful as *Debauchery*: and *Pique*, and *Resentment*, will hinder Eye-sight it self: and turn the plainest *Evidences* into Doubts, and often into *Falshoods*, with the Man that is actuated by them. Having thus mentioned the Dispositions of Mind which should be, in All who enquire into any

S E R M. Proposals offered to the World in God's Name ;

vii. 3. I shall now say something of the *Subject*  
~~~~ *Matter of our Enquiry*, with respect to that Religion particularly, in which we have been educated ; or, the Proposals made to the World by *Jesus Christ*.

The *first* thing which offers itself, is this, Whether He gives sufficient Evidence of his coming from God. For, without this Foundation, all He faith, concerning the express Promises of God, and the Conditions of his Favour to us, will be, at best, no more than so many probable Conjectures ; or such Arguments as Reason and Philosophy can supply the World with. Under this Head, therefore, you must consider his *Doctrine*. If this be, in all respects, worthy of an *Holy, Just, and Good, God* ; if it tends to the *Interest, Ease, and Quiet, of Rational, Intelligent Creatures* ; if it tends to the *Interest, and Peace, of Human Society*, by making the *Members* of it what they ought to be ; In a word, if it be the *Revival* of the great *Law of Reason*, upon stronger Motives than ever it was plainly promulgated upon, before : This will incline you, in favour of such a Teacher, to own that his *Doctrine* is worthy of *God* ; and bears upon it the *Characters* of that *Being*, by whom He professeth to be sent.

You must, in the next Place, consider the Number,

Number, Nature, and Openness, of his great S E R M. Works, to which He appealed constantly himself: particularly his *Resurrection* from the Dead; which he foretold, as the Sign, or Mark, upon, which he would put the Truth of his Pretensions. You must enquire into the *Evidences* that you have, that the Historical Account of these things is worthy of Credit, as transmitted down to us.

These are the main Subjects of *Enquiry*, under this Head, relating to the Truth of our Lord's Mission. And, upon *Enquiry*, it will be evident to any one, that we have such *moral Evidences* of the *Truth* of these *Histories*, recorded in the *Gospels*, as would be thought sufficient to influence Human Conduct, in any other respect; and that, from the Truth of the *Facts* recorded in those *Histories*, an *Impartial Enquirer* cannot but find ground to believe in *Jesus Christ*.

The next *Subject* of *Enquiry* after this, will be, What it is, that He himself delivers to his immediate Followers, as his Religion, and the Will of God: Because, if we do not confine our selves to what is his *true* and *pure Religion*, we may wander eternally in Mazes of Human Contrivance; and never extricate our selves out of those Difficulties, which may be brought upon us, in our Enquiries. *To whom can we go*

SERM. for the Words of Eternal Life ; but to Him, VII. who is the *Way*, the *Truth*, and the *Life* ?
 When we once acknowledge Him sent from God, it is at his Mouth only, that we can seek certain and useful Knowledge ; to settle our Faith, and secure our Practise. It is to no Purpose for us to enquire after the Doctrines of Men, which *They* would make necessary to Salvation ; when we have his Words, and his Decrees, to have recourse to. But, our only *Great Concern*, in order to the secure Conduct of our selves, is to enquire what it is that He himself layeth upon us, as necessary ; what He himself requires of us in God's Name, to believe, or practise, as a Condition, without which we shall not be happy : and what his *Apostles*, in their *Epistles*, or Conversation, in the World, do expressly lay upon us, as a *Condition* of Happiness ; and as received from their *Master*, to that very Purpose.

This *Rule* will be of vast use to us, with respect, both to such, as will be objecting Things against the Religion of *Jesus Christ* ; and to such as will be imposing Things, as of Necessity to *Eternal Salvation*. For, as the *Enquiry* then is natural, Whether those Things objected against *Christ's Religion*, be really in it, as He delivered it to the World : So, if we find them not there ; we cut off, at once, the whole

Ground

Ground of the Objection. On the other hand, S E R M. Are these things, which others would impose VII. upon *Christians*, as *Laws of God and Christ*, ✓✓ any where to be found in the *Gospel*, as delivered to the World, by *Himself*? If not; the Answer is easy to Those who would add, to his Laws, unreasonable Burthens; and bind them, upon Men under the severest Penalties. Thus, when we see, in the *Gospel* itself, the great and only Design of bringing Men to Happiness, by believing in *Jesus Christ* as sent of *God*, in order to a constant and regular Practise of all Virtue; of whatever is reasonable and becoming: this will give us such a View of *Christianity*, as will make us able to reply to all *Objections* against it, taken from any such *Representations* of it, as are different from, or contrary to, this.

These Two are the *Subjects* of *Enquiry*, to all who hear of the Offers made in the *Gospel*. Of these they are competent Judges, for the most part; if they will but apply the same Care, and Diligence, and Caution, which they use in any *Worldly Affair*. But when they are sent farther; and called upon, to enter into the particular Disputes between the several Sects and Parties of *Christians*; and, on every Side, required to give their *Affent*, with equal Positiveness and Assurance: When they are

SERM. carried into the Difficulties of other Parts of the
vii. *Bible*, which have exercised the Understandings
of the most learned Part of the World for many
hundred Years, without being conquered,
and explained ; and when an *Explicit* under-
standing all these, in one particular Sense ;
(and this never to be settled, or established,
with any Certainty;) is equally required of
them : Then, I confess, *Enquiry*, and *Exa-
mination*, may well seem frightful and dis-
couraging. But then the *Question* recurs, for
the Ease and Satisfaction of all Persons concern-
ed: viz. Did *Christ* himself, and his *Apostles*,
put these Matters upon the same foot with be-
lieving in *Him* ; and doing the *Will* of his *Fa-
ther*? Did He come into the World to require
Impossibilities ? Either to perplex the Under-
standings, or to distract the Consciences, of
Men ? When the *Question* is answered, What
doth *He* require, as a Condition of Happiness ;
all such Points will be seen to be but *secondary*
ones; in which Honest, and Understanding
Men may differ ; without losing their Charity
for one another, or their Title to the Favour of
their common Master.

If any one, therefore, should object, that
Enquiry and *Examination*, into *Christ's* Re-
ligion, are full of endless Difficulties ; it is
easy, upon this Foundation, to give a satis-
factory

factory Answer to such an *Objection*. As, S E R M.

1. It is a great Satisfaction to consider, that the very Disposition of Mind ready to receive Truth, when it appears so to be, is highly, in itself, acceptable to *God*; and will be rewarded by *Him*. So that, supposing the *Search*, or *Examination*, into the *Christian Dispensation*, to require Length of Time; or to be full of Difficulties: yet, here is a perpetual Satisfaction, that the Sincerity of Mind, and Intention, which every honest Man carries about him, is it self of that value in the Eyes of *God*, that it will make the Man the Object of his Favour. It is this inward Integrity, which *God*, who sees the Heart, values above all Things. Even under the Cloud of great Mistakes, *God* mercifully looks upon this; and is ready to reward it with his Favour. Otherwise, How hard would be the Condition of a weak and fallible Creature, if his *Eternal Happiness* were to be put upon his being in the Right in all Things; *i. e.* upon his being *Infallible*: and not upon his *Sincerity*, or *Honesty*; which is the only thing he hath thoroughly in his own Power? The best Human Understandings may err; and may be very slow in finding out and apprehending some Truths: and the meanest, much more. But then the meanest Understandings may have *Honesty*, and *Sincerity*, and *Intregrity*, accom-

SERM. panying them. And supposing them not to
VII. have arrived at the Knowledge, or Perception,
~~~ of the *Truth*, they are searching after: Yet,  
the very Sincerity, and Integrity, with which  
they are pursuing this Search, is the Thing  
which Almighty God highly values in them;  
and which He will certainly reward. So that,  
you see, there is nothing discouraging in the  
supposal of the Length and Difficulty of a *seri-*  
*ous Enquiry* into the *Truth* of the *Christian*  
*Religion*; because the *Honesty*, and *Integrity*,  
of the *Enquirer*, will always render Him ac-  
ceptable to God; and intitle him to his Favor.  
But,

2. The *Enquiry*, I am speaking of, requires  
no length of Time; nor contains any Difficulty  
in it, worth the naming. It cannot be long,  
before the Falshood of any Man's Pretenses,  
who comes, without Authority, as God's  
Messenger, must appear to a serious Person:  
either from his Doctrine carrying along with it  
the Marks of Falshood, and being unworthy of  
the Nature of God, or the Nature of Man;  
or from his Want of sufficient and well-attest-  
ed Works to prove his *Mission*. But where the  
*positive* Proofs are plain and evident; and the  
moral *Evidences* such as convince Men, and  
influence their Lives, in parallel Cases: there  
is no need, either of a great Capacity, to com-  
prehend

prehend these Proofs: or of a great deal of s E R M. Time, to perceive their Force. And this, I vii. say, is the Case of *Christianity*; as instituted uuu by *Christ*.

Nor ought these Proofs, and Evidences, to be esteemed so burthensome, or of so little Importance, as to be sent out of the Memory, or forgotten, under the Notion, that they were once considered, and found true: but always remembered, as the Reasons of that Hope, which is in *Christians*; according to St. Peter's Advice. For, What great Burthen can they be, to Men, who are concerned so much in them, as *Christians* are? What great Task, to any one of an ordinary Capacity, if he be questioned, Why he believes in *Jesus Christ*, and expects a *future State*? to answer, Because He himself arose from the Dead, after a Life of Holiness, and great Works; and after delivering a Doctrine to the World, worthy of God in all Respects? And, if he be asked, Why he believes these Things? to answer, Because they are *Matters of Fact*, delivered, with the greatest Marks of Sincerity, by Persons, who professed they saw, and heard, what they relate; by Persons, who had no Interest to serve by this *History*; who endured bitter Persecutions, and Death, to attest these *Matters of Fact*:

S E R M. *Faet* : and because, in any other case of Human  
vii. Conduct, these would be accounted the most  
prevailing *Evidences* possible ? I say, Where is  
the great Burthen of this, to the Memory, or  
Understanding, of any common Man ?

I doubt not, if the Riches and Grandeur of this World, were to be purchased upon such a Foundation ; it would never slip out of the Mind of the meanest Person : but always be uppermost ; and discover itself superior to all other Concerns that could come in his Way. And if any Persons should employ their Leisure, and their Wit, to persuade the World, that there is nothing in all this : not by invalidating such *Testimonies* about *Matters of Fact* ; but by puzzling Mens Brains with abstruse, metaphysical, Shews of Reason ; (of which the greatest Understandings are perhaps but very imperfect Judges, and the vast Bulk of the World no Judges at all;) I doubt not, but that if Worldly Interest were concerned, Men would presently answer to such Niceties ; that they are only like such *Trials of Skill*, as some Disputers used of Old, to prove, that there could be no such thing as *Motion* ; that these are not the *Arguments*, upon which *Human Life* ought to be conducted ; and that the *Moral Evidences*, upon which such *Facts* rely, are

are a more lasting and effectual Conviction, to S E R M. a Creature so framed as Man is, than any, of VII. another sort, that can be opposed to them.

But I have said enough to shew you, upon what good Grounds, and with how much Justice, the *Christian Religion* may encourage, and demand, your serious *Examination* into it ; and with what *Dispositions* of Mind, it ought to be performed. I shall proceed, in my following *Discourses*, to examine the *Conduct*, on one side, of *Those*, who bring a Scandal upon it, by putting their own Inventions, and Absurdities, upon an equal foot with it ; and then cry out upon the *Danger*, and *Impiety*, of any *Enquiry* into *Religion* : and, on the other side, of *Those*, who reject it, without any apparent Reason ; comparable to those *Evidences* which support it, and make it a Matter worthy of all Men to be received. For the present, I shall only add, that, if what I have offered, carries any Satisfaction along with it ; if it leads to the Discovery of any thing sufficient to influence the *Conduct* of *Human Life* ; and to revive that Hope, and Expectation, which we have been taught to have, in *Christ Jesus* : Nothing remains, but that, when we have proved it, and found it true, We hold fast that which is Good ; and direct all our present

S E R M. sent Views, and all our Actions, by this  
vii. Hope of Happiness to come ; which God, that  
cannot lye, hath promised to Those, who  
truly believe in his Son, and conscientiously  
obey his Will.

*Concerning*

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*Concerning impartial Enquiry in Religion: and  
the two Extremes of implicit Subjection and  
Infidelity.*

## S E R M O N VIII.

Preached at St. Peter's Poor, in Jan. 1712-13.

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I T H E S S. v. 21.

*Prove all Things: hold fast that which is good.*

**I**Come now, as I proposed in the Second Place, s E R M. to examine the *Conduct* of *Those*, who are in VIII. either of those *Two Extremes*, which I mentioned in my *last Discourse*.

The *first Extreme*, is that of those *Professed Christians*, who pretend, with great *Zeal*, that They have a *Right* to demand an *Unlimited Submission* to all their *Doctrines*, and *Appointments*: and condemn all *Trial*, and *Examination*, in their *Inferiors*, as a *Crime* of very fatal *Consequence*. The *Conduct* of these Persons, and the *Grounds* which they are known to

SERM. to go upon, I design now to enquire into: and  
viii. at the same time to shew the great Vanity, and  
~~~ Absurdity, of such monstrous Pretenses.

Now, in that *Church*, which alone *openly* declares this *Blind, Implicit, Submission* to all its Decrees, and Determinations, to be the true *Faith of a Christian*, You will presently find it all resolved into that *Infallibility*, and *Uner-ring Judgment*, which is affirmed to be lodged somewhere in it. If you ask the *Advocates* of this *Cause*, how they came by this *Infallibility*; and how they prove their Pretenses to it to be well-grounded: you will receive such sort of Answers, as themselves would be ashamed to give, in any *Worldly* matter; or any *Affair* of common Importance.

1. Some of them will tell you, that our *Sau-vicur* promised, *Matth. xxviii. 20.* to be with his *Church*, *i. e.* with *Them*, to the *End of the World*: and consequently, this *Church* is *Infallible*: and may justly claim an *Implicit Submission* from all *Men*, without any *Questions*, or *Enquiries*, about her *Impositions*.

To this it will be easy to answer, that the utmost that can be proved to be intended in that Promise of our Lord's, is this, that He would be assisting to his *Apostles*, and those who should succeed them, in the Propagation of his Religion, in their due Execution of that great and

important Office ; that He would be their S E R M. porter and Protector, in it. And, besides that VIII. nothing more than this can possibly be proved to be the Intent of this Promise : If you consider the *Absurdities* which must follow from the differing Turn that hath been given to this Passage, by the modern Pretenders to Infallibility, or to any *Authority* not to be gainsaid ; you will be the more convinced of the Weakness of this Proof. For they, who fix so enlarged and unbounded a Sense upon those Words, do, in effect, represent our *Saviour*, as speaking to this Purpose, “ *Lo, I am with you* ; I will not “ only be your Director, and Guide ; but the “ Director and Guide of all who shall succeed “ you, in professed to teach, or propagate, “ my Religion. I will be with them, in what- “ ever they shall say, or inculcate upon Men ; “ whether contrary to what I have taught my “ self, or not. I will be with them, in all “ their Contradictions of one to another ; in all “ their Absurdities and Follies ; in all the Me- “ thods they take of propagating Religion ; “ whether by Fire, and Massacre, or by In- “ struction, and Argument. Let them say “ what they will, let them do what they will, “ in their Zeal ; Let them decree Black to be “ White, and White to be Black ; still it is my “ doing ; it is my Will it should be submitted “ to :

SER M. "to : For Lo, I am with them to the End of
VIII. "the World."

~~~~ What Absurdities, We may justly ask, what Blasphemies, may not Men lay upon this *Text*, if they will put such an absolute, and unlimited, Interpretation upon it? Whereas the Office of the *Apostles*, and those who succeeded them, in the *Ministry* of the *Gospel*, was that of being *faithful Witnesses* of what they had seen and heard of our Blessed Lord; of his Life, and Death, and Doctrine. They themselves had a Trust committed to them; and that was, to preach to the World his *Resurrection*, and his *Religion*: the *Religion* delivered to them by himself. They had no Authority to add to his Words, themselves: but their Commission was, to instruct Mankind, as they should have opportunity; and to impart to the World those concerning Truths which they had received from Him. This Promise, therefore, could not convey, even to *Them*, any Authority, in saying or doing whatsoever any of them pleased; but only an Assurance of Help, and Support, in their due Performance of that Office, which was intrusted to them; that of preaching the *Laws* of *Christ*, without adding to them, or diminishing from them. And that this was not a Promise of *Infallibility*, even to the *Apostles* themselves, in their whole Conduct, is plain from

from the Behaviour of St. Peter, after this, with S E R M. respect to *Jew*, and *Gentile*; and from the Necessity St. Paul found, to *withstand him to his Face*, in that Part of his Conduct, which St. Paul thought to the Prejudice of the Gospel at that Time. Yet, notwithstanding this, we have seen this *Infallibility*, even confined peculiarly to St. Peter; and to his pretended *Successors*, considered as such: which He himself never claimed, in that absolute Sense, in which *They* have, since his Time, done it.

2. In the next Place, if you be not contented with such Interpretations of this *Place of Scripture*, as are utterly inconsistent with the Design of the *Gospel*; *They* refer you to another, in which Our Lord speaks, of *bearing the Church*, and of accounting those, who *bear it not, as Publicans and Sinners*, *Matt. xviii. 17*. And here again, they infer an absolute unlimited Duty, from a very limited and particular Expression; and shew as much Absurdity, as they can well shew, about the Interpretation of any one *Text of Scripture*.

Our *Blessed Lord* is here speaking of private Quarrels between Man and Man; and the Method of bringing Persons to Reconciliation one with another. And they presently interpret what is here said, as if it related to *Articles of Faith*; and an *Authority* in themselves, to make

S E R M. *Terms of Salvation* : Which Our *Saviour* never  
viii. sends us to learn from any Man, or any Col-  
le~~ct~~<sup>ct</sup>ion of Men, upon Earth ; any farther than  
as they may faithfully report, what He him-  
self, alone, was authorized to require, and or-  
dain.

The Word *Church*, in this Place, plainly signifies a Congregation, or Assembly of Brethren, in whose Presence the Matter is related; and to whom it is referred: And from hence, *They* presently collect something about the *Church*, in another Sense of the Word ; as it signifies the *Ecclesiastical Rulers*, whose Busines it is to perform *spiritual Offices* amongst *Christians* ; which was not indeed formed, or insti-  
tuted at the Time when these Words were spoken. He that is not willing, after the Me-  
thod here proposed, to listen to the Determi-  
nation of his Neighbours and Fellows ; and to  
come to Peace and Reconciliation ; is said to  
be *One* justly to be looked on, as a very bad  
Man : And from hence, *They* absolutely and  
indefinitely conclude, that whoever shall not  
blindly give himself up to the positive Deter-  
minations which *They*, under the Name of the  
*Church*, shall please to make, about *Articles*  
*of Faith*, and *Terms of Salvation* ; whosoever  
shall not swallow all their Decisions, without  
any *Questions*, or *Enquiries*, is to be account-  
ed

ed as an *Heathen*; and what is more, to be treat-<sup>S E R M.</sup> ed with such Severity, and such Inhumanity, as cannot lawfully be practised towards any *Heathen*; and such as the *Gospel* abhors, upon any Pretense whatsoever.

3. After this, they will carry us to those Texts, in which our Lord declares to his *Apostles* that, as his *Father sent him, so sends he them*; and that, *He that heareth them, heareth Him*; and the like: And from hence, *They* will conclude resolutely, that what they call the *Church*, hath the same Right to be heard in whatever it decrees about Religion, or that which it pleases to call Religion, as the *Apostles* themselves had, in delivering that to the World, which *Christ* entrusted to them. For, it is but resoving, that whatsoever was said to the *Apostles*, is to be interpreted as said chiefly to St. *Peter*; and after him, to the Rulers, of one particular Church in the World: And they think the Work done.

Now, there are several Ways of putting a stop to such weak *Sophistry* as this. The *first* is, That, supposing the *Apostles* commissioned, by such Expressions as these, to exact an *Implicit Belief* of every thing They should say; it doth not follow from hence, that They, who succeeded them in some Parts of their Office, can have such a Commission: Because their

SER M. Assurances and Powers from Above, were  
viii. greater than can be claimed, since their  
Time; because They had the Power of *Miracles*, on extraordinary Occasions, to appeal to; in a word, because many things were, and might well be, said to Them, which could not belong to any, but Themselves peculiarly.

But another thing is this; which, I believe, will be found to be very true: That the *Apostles* themselves had no Authority to publish any thing, but what they had committed to them by *Christ*. They were Witnesses, entrusted with what He thought fit. They were not the Makers, or Decrees, of that Religion which was to be delivered to the World. But that was settled by our Lord himself before; and only committed to them, to be reported to Mankind: And they were to be heard, only as they were the sincere Preachers of what they had received from him. Besides this, as I have already observed, the *Apostles* themselves never claimed, by Virtue of any such Words of our Lord, any Power of demanding an *implicit Belief* of what they delivered: But always referred to the Proofs they gave of the Truth of it; always spake to *Christians* (in the Way, little used by those who pretend to succeed them in their greatest Powers,) of *Reasons* for their *Hope*; of  
trying

trying the Spirits ; and of proving all Things, ~~SE R M.~~  
and holding fast only that which is good. So ~~viii.~~  
that the Result is this. Supposing the Apo- ~~viii.~~  
stles had required *Implicit Faith* ; or an Im-  
plicit Submission to every thing they should  
decree : It would not be a good Argument,  
why *others* should afterwards do so ; who had  
neither their Instructions, nor their Assurances.  
But this Supposition is groundless. For the  
*Apostles* claimed no Privileges, but to be heard  
as faithful *Relaters* of the *Doctrine*, and *Reli-  
gion*, delivered to them by their Lord : And  
always encouraged their Auditors to examine  
into the *Reasons* of Things ; and to *try*, and  
*prove*, in general, whatever came to them, un-  
der the Notion of Divine, and Supernatural.

So vast a Difference is there between *Those*,  
who had no Interest to support, but that of  
Truth and Righteousness ; and *Those*, who  
have Worldly Pomp, and Grandeur, and  
Riches, to procure, or preserve, or increase.  
The *one* is for *Tryal*, and *Examination* :  
Which never can hurt, nor injure Truth.  
The *other* is for an easier Method : For yield-  
ing up all Pretense to Understanding, and  
Reason ; and going into that Way, which  
will encourage all the *Absurdity* and *Folly* in  
the World ; and make Truth and Falshood,  
Light and Darkness, the same Things, and

S E R M. equally eligible. For, let there be but an  
 VIII. Universal Readiness to swallow whatever shall  
 be ordered ; the *Question* among those who  
 are to decree, will seldom be, what is rea-  
 sonable ; or what is fitting ; or what is the *Gos-  
 pel of Jesus Christ* : But what is most for the  
 Advancement of their own Power, and Hon-  
 our, and Riches.

4. But, to return : If these *Texts*, to which  
 the Pretenders to *Infallibility* in themselves,  
 and an *Implicit Subjection* in others, appeal,  
 seem to fail them at any Time ; they then are  
 forced to appeal to that hated Reason, which  
 at other Times they so much explode. They  
 will tell you, that it is highly reasonable and  
 fitting, that there should be this Method of  
 putting an End to all *Doubts*, and all *Contro-  
 versies* ; that Men, being subject to Mistakes  
 and Errors, it is very necessary there should be  
 somewhere a Judge, to whose Determination  
 they should all blindly submit ; and that, this  
 being so necessary, to be sure, *Almighty God* hath  
 been pleased to take care, that there should  
 be such a *Judge* ; and consequently such a  
 blind Submission should be due from all Per-  
 sons : And that, one *Church* only pretending  
 to this *Infallibility* ; it belongs to that, and to  
 no other. But this way of treating Mankind,  
 cannot be compared to any thing better, than

to the dealing of some *Empiricks*, who should S E R M. set up upon this Bottom, that Mankind is VIII. subject perpetually to a Multitude of Diseases, which render their Lives very uneasy, before the Time of their Natural Death comes; that it is highly convenient, there should be an infallible Way of curing all these Diseases; that, therefore, it is not to be supposed, but that God hath, in his Providence, taken Care that there should be such a Way: And that, consequently, no other Persons but themselves, pretending to Cure all Diseases infallibly, *They* ought to be looked upon, as the *Infallible Directors of Physick*; and all Persons concerned, ought to apply to them, in their Distress. But alas! this is but insulting the Misfortunes of Mankind, instead of curing them; it is a sort of triumphing over their Miseries, rather than shewing them a Way out of them.

For, in the *first* Place, supposing Man so framed by *Almighty God*, that, after all his best *Enquiries*, and his most serious Examination of things, he may err; this ought to teach us, that *Error*, in an honest Mind, is not that damnable thing which some Men would make us believe; that the great Design of true Religion, respects *Practice*, and not *Theory*; and that the Father of all Things

S E R M. knows how to make all reasonable Allowances  
 VIII. for the involuntary, and undesigned, Mis-  
 takes of his imperfect Creatures.

In the *next* Place, the Argument is not good, that, because a thing would be highly convenient, therefore *God* hath certainly ordered it. For it is plain in Fact, that there are Multitudes of Unhappinesses, and Inconveniences, belonging to weak and mortal Men, for which *He* hath appointed no certain Reme-  
 dy. And, in the Case before us, it is fully suf-  
 ficient to say, That *He* punishes Men only for their wilful, and obstinate Sins ; and that *He* leaves their unavoidable Errors, and Frailties, to be the Subject of their mutual Charity, as they are of his own divine Compassion.

But then, in the *third* Place, supposing the *Premises*; How shall we know, Whither to have Recourse? Supposing such a *Judge*, or such an *Infallible Church*; where shall we find it? Why, certainly, they answer, Where there is but *one*, that so much as pretends to it, *That* must be it. Which is, as I said just now, as if an *Empirick* should tell us, There is no other Person in the World, that so much as pretends to cure Diseases infallibly, besides myself; Therefore, I certainly can ; and you ought all to come to me. As if the Modesty, or Humility, of *Others*, who cannot thus in-

sult the common Sense of Mankind, were an ~~S E R M.~~  
Argument against them ; and, as if *They*, VIII.  
who pretended to most, had always most ~~most~~  
Reality in them.

But, supposing another *Judge*, or another *Church*, should set up for *Infallible* ; and claim the same Subjection ; (which is not an impossible Supposition ;) Whither should we then go ? The Argument would be destroyed : And we could take no other Method, but to examine, *first*, Whether there is Reason to expect to find any such *Infallibility* any where ; and, *secondly*, which of the *Pretenders* to it, have the real *Title*. And this would reduce us to that Necessity of Examination, by Reason, and Revelation, which I am contending for ; and destroy the End for which this Argument is alledged.

But again ; Supposing us to come, ready furnished with all *Implicit Submission*, to the only *Church*, which ever pretended expressly to such an *Authority* ; even in this very *Church*, with all its Boasts, *They* cannot tell us exactly, where to apply for the Comfort of this *Infallible Authority*. Some send us to *One Person* at the Head ; some to whole *Councils* ; and some to *both*. Whichever way they pitch upon ; it is not more certain that Light is contrary to Darkness, than that what hath been decreed  
by

SER M. by *one Pope*, hath been reversed by *Another* ;  
 VIII. that what hath been determined in *one Council*,  
 ~~ hath been annulled in *Another* ; and so, for-  
 wards and backwards, from the Beginning, to  
 this Day. To what Distress then, would they  
 reduce Men ; first, to persuade them, that a  
 weak frail Man, or a Collection of fallible  
 Men, are Infallible, and unerring in their  
 Decisions : And then to lead them a Round,  
 from Contradiction to Contradiction ; and  
 from the Belief of one Age, to the contrary  
 Belief of another ; without Satisfaction, and  
 without End ? How much more like *Men*,  
 and like *Christians*, would it be, to acknow-  
 ledge themselves to be but *Men* ; to leave the  
 unavoidable Errors of Mankind to the Mercy  
 of God, as He himself hath done ; and to  
 claim no more Subjection, than what *Reason*,  
 and the *Gospel*, give them a Title to.

I must not here forget *another Pretense*,  
 which comes much to the same : viz. That  
 the great Divisions, and Differences of Opinion,  
 amongst other *Christians*, are owing to their  
 not acknowledging such an *Implicit Subjection*  
 to this *Infallible Judge*. The *Answer* is easy,  
 and plain : For, 1. That this would be no  
 certain Cure, is evident, from those many and  
 high *Divisions*, amongst Themselves, who  
 plead for this Subjection : Which are, in these  
 last,

last Days, come to a very great and flaming <sup>S E R M.</sup> Height, in many Instances. And, 2. How <sup>VIII.</sup> can it be otherwise, when in *one* Age, Favour is shewn to one Opinion; and in *another*, Favour is shewn to the contrary: When *one* *Infallible Judge* is of one Party; and the next that comes, is of another: And when Determinations are perpetually made, according to Interest and Favour. And then, 3. If *Jesus Christ*, and his *Apostles*, have not so plainly determined many Points; but that there is room for Differences amongst *honest Believers*: Why should any *Judge*, after them, pretend to settle Religion, better than *They* did; or, why should *Christians* be harder, and more severe, upon one another, than *God himself* will be upon any of them? Sincerity, and Uprightness of Heart; Righteousness, and Holiness of Life; Humility, Charity, and universal Love and Friendship: *These* are the Things, which the Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, seeks after. And the truly honest *Christian* needs not be afraid of the *Terrors* of those, who take not their Maxims from the *Doctrine*, or *Example* of *Christ*; but from this World, and the Interests of it.

I mention these *Terrors*, because, when every Art fails, then, last of all, the Ignorant are to be *terrified*, into this Submission:

And

S E R M. And to be told, that it is a Sin to entertain the  
viii. least Doubt about this *Authority*; and such a  
~~~~ Sin, as will be their utter and eternal Ruin. It  
is paralleled with rejecting the *Gospel*, and
opposing *Christ*: And so *They* are to make up
by *Terror*, what is wanting in *Argument*.
To which, I confess, nothing can be replied;
but that there is nothing like all this in the
Gospel of *Jesus Christ*. He came into the
World to reconcile Men to God, by leading
them to Amendment, and to all Holiness.
Many Works did he perform, to convince the
World of his *Authority*. He appointed his
Apostles, and *Ministers*, to go on in the same
good Design. He feared not the *Light*; and
therefore appealed to it. He hath given no
Commission to any, to pretend to a *Lordly Au-*
thority over the Understandings, or Consci-
ences, of Mankind. But, as his Religion con-
fists not in Niceties; and aims at nothing but
the Happiness of Mankind; and is founded
upon *Truth*: He hath left it to the Evidence
that supports it. Vast and unconceivable Pre-
judice hath been done to it, by Men's pre-
tending to be wiser than He; to add to his
Institutions, and his Doctrines: And to impose
upon Men their own *Additions*, under Pretense
of an *Incontestible Authority*; and under any
sort of *Worldly Penalties*.

I have

I have now sufficiently shewn you the ~~SERM.~~ great Absurdity of *Those*, who have run into ~~VIII.~~ this *Extreme*: And the Contradiction of it to ~~the~~ the Behaviour of our *Lord*, and his *Apostles*. I shall take the next Opportunity to speak of the *Other Extreme*, I mentioned at first.

Concerning

*Concerning impartial Enquiry in Religion: and
the two Extremes of implicit Subjection and
Infidelity.*

S E R M O N IX.

Preached at St. Peter's Poor, in Jan. 1712-13.

I T H E S S. V. 21.

Prove all Things: hold fast that which is good.

S E R M. I N my last Discourse, I considered and ex-
IX. amined, the *Grounds*, upon which those
professed *Christians* go, who set up Them-
selves for *Guides* to their Brethren; and re-
quire, under the Penalties of this World, an
implicit, and Blind Submission, without any
Enquiries, to all their Determinations. And,
I hope I shewed you, how void of all Support,
either from the Light of Reason, or the Gos-
pel of *Jesus Christ*, such Pretenses are; how
contrary to the Nature and Interests of Truth,
which ever desires to be looked into; and how
contrary to the Conduct of our *Lord*, and his
Apostles, who encourage, and applaud, a sin-
cere

cere and inquisitive Temper, with Respect to ~~S E R M.~~
Religion.

IX.

Secondly, I come now to the Conduct of Those Men, who are in the *Second Extreme*, I mentioned at first; and to consider those *Grounds*, upon which such Persons profess to go, as under the Appearance and Pretense of Examination, but, without the thing itself, reject the *Gospel*; and recommend Infidelity to the World. And this I shall do, in such a Method, as that these pretended *Grounds*, which they go upon, may appear; and, at the same Time, the real Design, and very great Partiality of those who go upon them. Of this *Conduct*, I shall give *Three*, or *Four*, particular *Instances*: Which are constantly seen to be the chief and avowed Supports of this *Extreme*.

1. One principal Point, I shall mention, is this. When the different or contradictory Notions, or absurd Opinions, of *Divines*, or other *Christians*, are represented so, as to lead unwary Persons to make them an *Argument* against the *Gospel* itself: It is very evident, that the Design is not to recommend *Truth*; but to prejudice Men's Minds against what ought only to be proposed to their fair *Examination*.

I confess, it is very shameful to consider, that *Men* should not be contented to be *Men*;
and

S E R M. and to think for themselves; *One*, one Way, ix. and *Another*, another; that so many should, *with* Violence and Passion, be seen to lay the same Stress upon their own Interpretations, and Conjectures, which they do, upon the main Design, and plainest Declarations, of the *Gospel*; and others, to oppose them with their own particular *Schemes*, of another sort, in the common Methods of Heat and Violence. But these are the *Movements* of *Human Nature*, got loose from the Guidance of *Reason*, as well as of the *Gospel*: And therefore, let *Them* take the Shame of this, to themselves, who deserve it. But what is this to *Christianity* itself: Which contains in it, neither their *Doctrines*, nor their *Spirit*?

If a Man should collect all the contradictory Opinions, and absurd Notions, of the *Philosophers* of Old; and of Those who profess to follow only *Natural Light*; and represent the foolish manner, in which the *Text of Reason* hath been explained by its *Interpreters*; and if these Absurdities should be made an Argument against *Reason* itself, and its plainest and most uncontroverted Maxims: Would not this be more absurd, than even those Absurdities themselves; which are pretended to give Ground to it? Would it not be easy to reply, that *Reason* is very ill treated by such *Opponents*;

nents; that the *Law of Reason* remains firm and stable, notwithstanding that its professed Interpreters have erred grievously; that it is highly absurd to deny the first Principles of all Science, and all Certainty, because Some who profess to build upon these Principles, have grossly mistaken in the *Consequences* they have drawn from them; that it is the most unfair, and unsincere Thing in the World, to lay *that* upon *Reason* itself, which ought to be charged solely upon the Weakness, or Passion, of Those, who, professing to follow it, could not keep up to it, either through Incapacity, or Inadvertence, or Prejudice, or Vice. But, tho' the same Persons will not, (as indeed they ought not to,) allow this to be a good Argument against the *Use of Reason*: Yet we find them, too often, treating the *Christian Religion*, after this manner.

Let us then, upon this Occasion, apply what hath been said, in the *Case of Reason*, to *that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*: And we may safely put it upon this *Issue*; which is but equitable and reasonable. Let the *Gospel* be charged with nothing, but what itself contains. Let *Jesus Christ*, and his *Apostles*, who were the Preachers of his Doctrine, be charged only with what themselves preached and taught. But let not the Absurdities, or

S E R M. Follies, of *Christians*, be laid at the Door of
ix. that *Religion*, which, in its Original, knows
them not. By this means, the ground of such
Sort of *Objections*, is wholly removed. For
the *Answer* will presently offer itself; when
the *Enquiry* is about the Truth of our Blessed
Lord's Pretensions; and not about the Under-
standing, or Conduct, of his Followers.
What is this to the Purpose? What, if
Christians have thus contradicted one another?
What, if they have opposed, anathematized,
and destroyed, one another, by a furious Zeal
for their own particular Explications of their
Master's Doctrine? What, if many Absurdi-
ties have been vented, and propagated?
How very unfair, and unjust is it, to charge
those upon our Blessed *Lord*, or his *Apostles*,
who have nothing like them in their preach-
ings; who have none of these Contradictions;
none of these Absurdities; in their *Settle-
ment* of our Religion: And never gave the
least Encouragement to any such Conduct, in
their Followers?

I grant, indeed, if the Dispute were about
the Behaviour, the Understanding, or Im-
partiality, of all who have professed to inter-
pret the *Gospel*; or to frame Schemes and Sy-
stems of it: If our Faith were to be made for
us by These; then, the Objection would have
some

some Force; and these Contradictions, and ^{S E R M.} Absurdities, might well be so often brought in. But, God be thanked, this is not the Point. What hath been said by weak, and fallible Men, tho' affirmed with never so much Positiveness; tho' backed with never so much Worldly Authority; tho' strengthened with all the Penalties of this World, and of that which is to come: All is nothing to Men heartily concerned about their *Religion*. The Point is, what our *Lord* himself requires; and what his *Apostles* themselves deliver, as from *Him*. This is the important Enquiry: And this ought to be strictly observed by All, who profess to examine into His Doctrine. It is a most equitable Rule, not to lay That upon his Religion, which He never himself put into it: Because it was He himself, who was to deliver it from the *Father*, ready framed; and because He never gave Authority, even to his *Apostles* themselves, to make any Addition to that *Scheme of Doctrine*, and *Salvation*, which He delivered to *Them*. St. *Paul* expressly affirms this, that the *Apostles* themselves were only *Stewards of the Mysteries of God*: In whom He affirms *Faithfulness* to be the principal Point. *Moreover, it is required in Stewards, that a Man be found faithful,*
1 Cor. iv. 2.

S E R M. Nothing, indeed, can be more unjust, than, ix. in pretended *Enquiries* after the *Truth* of ~~the~~ Christianity, to cast upon our *Lord* himself, and his Religion, all those *Contradictions* which have been vented by any of his professed Disciples; or those *Absurdities*, which weak Men have unhappily fastened, as *Interpretations*, and *Commentaries*, upon what He said or did: Unless the *Case* were so, that the *World* had no *Account* of his *Proceedings*, but what was to be picked out of the *Commentaries*, and *Systems*, of *numberless Writers*. Whereas, it is far otherwise. His *Gospel* lies open. His own *Declarations* of what God absolutely requires, are as plain as well can be, before *Art*, or *Passion*; *Ignorance*, or *Learning*; have perverted them. If any thing can justly be offered against his own *Conduct*, or his own *Doctrine*; He himself refuseth not to hear it. But it is but just to demand, that the *Faults* of others be not imputed to the *Faultless*; nor the *Follies* of Men to *Him*, who never encouraged them.

They who will not consent to this *Equitable Rule*, may as well charge all the *Vices*, and *Villainies*, of any professed *Christians*, upon the *Gospel* itself. But then, the true Method is, to look into *that*: And it will be quickly found, that they are not only not encouraged, but

absolutely condemned, there. How would ~~it be liked~~ ^{SERM.} by some Persons, if all the Luxury, and Intemperance, and Wickedness, of ~~those~~ ^{IX.} who have professed themselves *Epicureans*, should be charged upon *Epicurus*, their Master. Would it not presently be answered, That this could not fairly be done: Because *He* certainly placed Pleasure and Happiness, in *Temperance*, and many of the *Moral Virtues*: As is plain from the most *Authentic Accounts* We have, of his own Life, and Doctrine; which ought to be the Measure of our Judgment and Censure of him. I cannot indeed deny, but that this is common Justice, due to all. But if his Advocates will contend for this, in *his* Case, who certainly taught Men to cast off that Regard to any superior Being, which might have been a great Bar against *Vice*, and a great Inducement to *Virtue*, amongst his Followers: Then, certainly, must they themselves be ashamed of not following the same Rule, in judging concerning a *Greater than He*; *One*, who had all his Personal Virtues, in Perfection, with none of his Follies and Absurdities; and *One*, who taught a Doctrine worthy of all Men to receive, upon Principles able to support them in the *Practice* of it.

I grant, indeed; nay, I contend for it; that these great *Differences of Opinion*,

SE R M. amongst many Honest and Learned *Enquirers* ;
ix. that these Contradictions to one another, and
absurd Notions, fixed by many of them upon
their Religion ; are excellent Reasons for mu-
tual Forbearance ; great Arguments that God
will not judge *Christians* at last, by the *Truth*
of their *Speculations*, but by the Sincerity and
Integrity of their Searches after *Truth* : And
strong Inducements to all, to look impartially
into the *Gospel* itself ; in order to know what
our *Lord* himself hath taught, and what He
requires. Thus far these Differences, and Ab-
surdities, may justly be urged. But when,
under Pretense of all this, these *Contradic-
tions* have another Turn given to them ; when
many Insinuations against the *Gospel* itself, are
interspersed ; when some of the greatest of
these *Absurdities* are represented as the *Funda-
mentals* of the *Gospel* itself ; and, at the same
Time, *Infidelity*, and *Atheism*, artificially re-
commended, as the Result of Just Reasoning :
Then, it is more than suspicious, that these
Particulars are so carefully collected, merely as
Arguments, or *Prejudices*, against the *Gospel*
itself. But there cannot be imagined a more
unjust Procedure, than this is : Which is no
better, than casting off a *Religion*, not for
what *is* in it; but, for what *is not* in it;

I mean,

I mean, the Weaknesses, or Absurdities, of S E R M.
some who have professed it. But again, IX.

2. Of a piece with this *Procedure* is, the  picking up Multitudes of little *Stories*, which have not half that Evidence to support their Truth, which the *Facts* of the *Gospel* have ; and which, supposing them true, signify nothing to the first Institution of *Christianity* : And the embellishing and venting *these*, in such a Manner, as manifestly tends to the Prejudicing the Minds of unwary Persons, against *Christianity* itself. An *Art*, in which many of those excel, who seem disposed to banish all Belief of the *Gospel*, out of the World ! But, how unjust this is, a very little Consideration will shew us.

For, is it a wonder, that, in the course of many hundred Years, many Things have happened, in the Conduct of Men, (who are ever weak, and often prejudiced, and passionate,) which may be justly enough turned into *Ridicule* ; or which cannot be justified by the Rules of that *Religion* which they have professed. Suppose, for Instance, that *some*, in process of Time have turned *Christians*, for low Ends ; or with false *Views*, and base Designs : Either for worldly Advancement ; or to find a Refuge from the Sins which they had committed in other Professions ? Or, suppose that

S E R M. others have turned *Apostates* from *Christianity*,
ix. because of the vile Behaviour of many *Christians* ; and their pretending to greater spiritual Powers, than could be justly claimed by them ? Or, suppose, that a professed *Christian* hath sometimes talked, as if he had little Belief of some or other of the main *Articles of Christianity* : I say, supposing these, and the like Facts ; yet, What are these to the *Gospel*, as delivered to the World by *Jesus Christ* ? In that, there may be sufficient Reasons for *honest Men* to believe in *Him* ; notwithstanding that, many Years after his Death, some became *Christians* upon *other Grounds*. In that, there may be sufficient Reasons against any *Believer's* apostatizing from his *Religion* ; notwithstanding that there have been *Apostates*, upon *other Reasons*, which do not at all affect his *Religion*, as He left it. In that, there may be sufficient Evidences of a *Resurrection* ; notwithstanding that some of his professed Followers may have talked, with some Doubtfulness, or great Uncertainty, about it.

I might here observe, that such sort of *Stories* are not always reported from the most credible *Authors* ; or that they are often represented, and magnified, beyond what Simplicity, and Integrity, can justify. But I chuse to put it upon this, That, supposing the Truth of them,

them, or of any like to them ; the *Gospel* may, ~~S E R M.~~ and doth, still, stand untouched, and free ~~IX.~~ from any Disadvantage from them. Let it be ~~✓~~ true, that it hath been professed upon weak or worldly Grounds, by *some* Men ; let it be true, that some Things in it have been disbelieved by others. These are not the Points in Debate between the Men who believe it ; and those who profess to reject it : But whether, there be not great and sufficient Arguments for our embracing the Profession of it ; and for receiving *Him*, who instituted it, as sent from God. Whoever pretends to bring a Disreputation upon it, ought, in Justice, to take his Arguments, if he can find any, from what is really in it, as it lies in those Books themselves, which profess to acquaint us with it, in it's pure Original. But when, instead of this, Men have recourse to little *Stories*, and *Tales*, of Men, or of Things, many Years after the *Institution* of it ; as if they were *Points* which ought to affect the *Gospel* itself : This is a certain Sign of the utmost Prejudice ; and not of any thing like an impartial and just *Examination* ; which the *Gospel* itself never refuseth to undergo. Again,

When a long and tedious work is made about *false Miracles*, and *pretended Wonders*, and Impositions upon the *Senses*, and *Understandings*,

S E R M. standings, of Mankind; and, at the same Time, no Distinction allowed in Favour of those recorded, in the *Gospel-History*; nay, when many Insinuations are given as if all Pretenses were alike; and especially, when *Infidelity* and *Atheism* are, at the same Time, complemented as the Effects of great Sagacity, in those who have professed them: Then is it a plain Sign, that the *Gospel* is not recommended to be ingenuously and fairly examined; but to be condemned, upon unjust and unequal Grounds. For, before the *Gospel Miracles* can be justly condemned, the Point would be, to shew, that our *Lord* refused to do his great Works before his *Adversaries*, or those who had an Heart to examine them; as *Impostors* have done: That He avoided the Light; and required of his immediate Followers *Faith* without *Sight*; that He did not give sufficient Evidence to those about Him, that He was neither an *Impostor*, nor an *Enthusiast*; that his Conduct was like that of those, who refuse all *Trial*, and give manifest Proof that nothing of those great Things are true, which they pretend in their own Favour. For, how doth it follow, that, because there have been many *Cheats* in the World, therefore there is no such Thing as *Truth*? or, that nothing truly great and uncommon, sufficient to demonstrate

strate the Favour of God, hath ever been s E R M. wrought in Confirmation of what is excellent and good; because many vile Persons, have, u u at several Times, for worldly Ends, and secular Purposes, play'd *Tricks* with Mankind; and imposed upon the Minds of the Vulgar? Why should this be produced as an Inlet, and Introduction, to Infidelity? Or what is there like it, in our *Lord's* Conduct, that can justify such a Procedure?

The *Design* of *Impostors* is presently seen through: To keep up a temporal Authority; to maintain or increase, *Power*, or *Riches*. But *He* could not but be void of any such Design; whose Low Estate, and utter Renunciation to every Thing in this World, and certain Expectation of Death itself for his Pretenses, were as remarkable, as His Great and Mighty Works themselves. The *Doctrine* of *False Pretenders* appears plainly to tend to magnify themselves; and to set up a gainful Kingdom over Mens Consciences. But *His Doctrine* was Humility, and Contempt of this World; a preferring one another in Love: It led to a Scene of Self-denial, in many Cases; to the Expectation of Rewards in another State, and of Persecution, in this. He aimed at no other Kingdom over Men, but the Government of their Passions, and of their Actions, by the Rules

S E R M. Rules of Reason ; and the Hope of Glory ;
ix. and the Fear of God's Displeasure. And,
therefore, the Suspicion of *Imposing* upon the
World could not lie upon Him : As the
Appearance of it plainly lies upon other mo-
dern *Pretenders* to *Miracles*. And, therefore,
His Works themselves, should be examined :
Which, neither, in their Number, nor Kind,
bear any more Resemblance to the Pretended
Works of *Impostors* ; than a vast Variety of Be-
neficient, Divine, Charitable, Open, Acts, do
to one single Trick repeated yearly ; or to Em-
pty, Useless Appearances ; or to Clandestine,
and Dark Proceedings, without any Witnesses,
but such as have an Interest to serve, a worldly
Cause to carry on, by endeavouring to support
the Credit of them. This makes a vast Dif-
ference : And should, in common Justice, be
taken into the account, by all who pretend to
examine into so important a Matter, as that
of Religion.

If it should be replied, that it is for the
worldly Interest of those who have corrupted
Christianity, and made the *Riches* and *Grandeur*
of this World a Part of the *Gospel* ; that it is
for their Interest, and for the Continuance,
and Support, of all that they shall think fit
to put upon Mankind, under the Notion of
Christianity, that the Miracles recorded in the
Gospel,

Gospel, should have Credit given to them ; ~~S E R M.~~ and be supported by such Persons : Which ~~IX.~~ may bring a just Suspicion upon them : I an- ~~sw~~sw

1. *No Just Suspicion*, certainly, with any, who will consider, that it is plain, from all *Antient Writers*, that the *Gospels* were in being ; and the *Miracles* in them recorded, before any such Abuses came into *Christianity* ; nay, long before there was any Temptation to impose upon the World ; that is, long before the *Princes*, or the *Favors*, of this World came into the *Church* ; whilst little besides *Persecution* could be expected by *Christians* ; and little Hopes could appear of ever having it otherwise : That, from the Beginning, during all that Scene, when nothing was promoted by these *Miracles*, but Believing in a *Crucified Saviour*, whose Kingdom was not of this World ; then, I say, these *Miracles* were recorded in the *Gospel-History*. From whence it is plain, that they have no Relation to any such Corruptions, as came not into the *Church*, till very many Years after these *Miracles* were done ; and these *Books* were written. But then,

2. The *Miracles* which *Christ* himself did, can confirm no *Doctrine*, but what *Christ* himself delivered to the World. They have no more relation to what hath been, or may

SERM. may be, fixed upon his Religion, by any who
ix. profess to follow Him; than if such Persons
were not called *Christians*. This is very plain
to all who weigh Things equally. For,
otherwise, they might be supposed to support
Pretenses and *Doctrines*, directly opposite to
his own: Because *Christians*, so called, (I
mean, many of those who profess themselves
so,) are capable of being moved by Worldly
Considerations, to enter into Measures directly
opposite to those of his Institution; and to
contradict his good and great Design, as much
as if they were called by any other Name in
the World; the Name *Christian* not altering
either Men's Principles, or their Manners.
It being, therefore, impossible that our *Lord's*
own *Miracles* can be the Support of Doctrines,
or Designs, directly contrary to his own; it
being certain, that they confirm nothing but
what he designed they should confirm; *viz.*
His own *Pretensions*, and his own Religion,
as delivered by *Him*; and, consequently,
that they cannot support any thing contrary to
the Laws of God, and Universal Righteous-
ness: There can be no ground of Suspicion in
His Case; nor any Excuse for bringing them
under the same Head, with Works only pre-
tended to be done; and this, manifestly for
the Support of *Designs*, which neither *He*,
nor

nor his *Apostles*, acknowledged to be agreeable ~~S E R M.~~
to his *Religion*. Nay,

IX.

3. Those who have taken upon them to add their own Inventions to his *Religion*; and to appeal to any sort of *Tricks*, or pretended *Miracles*, for the Support of those Inventions; and for the keeping up a *Temporal Interest* in the World; have never had the Assurance to appeal to our *Lord's* own *Miracles*, for the Support of what they have aimed at; but have always thought it necessary to have *additional Miracles*, for *additional Articles of Faith*; and *New Works*, to support their *New Designs*. So that they themselves give no ground to any Person to suspect our *Blessed Lord's* Works; as having any unworthy Design to support: But plainly confess, by this Procedure, that the *Miracles* which *He* did, go no farther, and were designed no farther, than to support the *Doctrine* which *He* himself taught; and to promote the End for which *He* came into the World.

It is, therefore, I say, manifestly unjust, to put the *Miracles* of our *Blessed Lord*, recorded in the *Gospels*, upon the same foot of Suspicion, with *Those*, which, not only want the same sort of *Testimony*, as to their *Reality*; but also, are professed to be done, in order to support *Worldly Ends*, and such *Designs*, as we cannot

SERM. cannot but judge to be unworthy of God :
ix. When, at the same Time, it must be acknowledged, that no such Designs can be supported by our *Lord's Miracles*; nor any indeed, but that noble Design, worthy of God, of Redeeming us, first from the *Power*, and then from the *Punishment*, of our Sins. To return,

4. When the *Persons*, who pretend to be great Enemies to the *Notions*, and *Speculations*, which have been brought by some *Christians* into Religion; nevertheless, embrace, and greedily catch at, any subtle, metaphysical, and abstruse, ways of Arguing, about Necessity, and Fate; or such like *Subjects*; not level to the Capacities of any number of Men; and perhaps not certainly intelligible to Men of great Understandings; when these puzzling, and mysterious Arguings, are advanced, and set up, against all the *Moral Evidences* of the *Gospel*; when, together with the Pretense of rejecting every thing that is not plain in Religion, fine and unintelligible Subtilties of *Disputation* are introduced: Then, is there Reason, from such contradictory Proceedings, to suspect great Partiality, and little Love to a *Just Examination* of Things. When, instead of these *Moral Evidences* of *Christianity*, other sort of Arguings are put into Men's Heads;

of which they never were, nor ever will be, S E R M.
tolerable Judges: This is a *partial*, and un- IX.
equal, Procedure; and what the same Persons ~~~~~
would not perhaps be guilty of, in any other
Case, but that of *Religion*. For the Conduct
of Human Life is guided and influenced by
such *Moral Evidences*, as are sufficient to put
Men beyond reasonable Doubt; by the Testi-
mony of credible, and unexceptionable, Wit-
nesses; and the Absence of all real ground
for *Suspicion*; and the like. Of which
Things, a little common Sense makes most
Men pretty good Judges.

It hath pleased *God* to deal with Men, in
the *Christian Dispensation*, in this easy Me-
thod; in which they are so well satisfied in
many other Cases. That our *Blessed Lord* li-
ved, and died, and arose again; that, before
his Death, He wrought many great and won-
derful Works; and this with a Design, and
Doctrine, worthy of *God*; we learn from such
Testimony, as hath no Objection against it, that
would be accounted good, in any other paral-
lel Case. Now, supposing that it had plea-
sed *Him* to have taken another Method; and
to have spoken to us in an Abstruse and Subtle
way of Reasoning; without any such *Facts* or
any such *Testimonies* to them: I should not
have wondered, if the same Persons should

SE R M. have been the first Complainers ; and the first
ix. to have represented this *Method*, as not likely
to come from *God* ; as too hard, and too un-
intelligible, to the *greatest Part*, if not the
Whole, of Mankind. But if this would have
been reasonable ; how much more so is it, not
to neglect the *Facts*, and *Testimonies*, upon
which the *Gospel* relies, for the sake of any
of those subtle Speculations, or Arguings,
which are wholly unintelligible to the greatest
Part of Mankind ; and by which the *Conduct*
of *Human Life* is never guided, in any confide-
rable Instance : Not to enter into a *Method*
which cuts off all *Examination* into the *Truth*
of *Christianity*, at once ; and builds an *Infidelity*
upon *Cobwebs*, as thin, or as intricate,
as any *Modern Schoolman* ever wove for his own
System of Christianity.

Thus have I produced several Instances of a
very unreasonable *Proceeding* against *Christianity* : Which doth not tend at all to the *Exa-
mination* of the *Truth* of the *Gospel* ; but to
the positive *Condemnation* of it, upon such
Grounds as, I have shewn you, cannot rea-
sonably affect the Foundation upon which that is
built. And, as unreasonable, as these are ;
yet, (as far as I can see, or hear,) They are the
chief of the *Modern Pretenses of Unbelievers*,
whenever they are endeavouring to bring a Dis-
reputation

reputation upon the *Gospel* itself. This is so ~~serm~~ true, that, if you take away their little *Stories* of Persons, and Things, many Years after *Jesus Christ*; their Harangues about Absurdities, and Contradictions, of some weak and passionate Men, which are not in the *Gospel*; their long and jocose Accounts of *Modern Miracles*, and *Tricks*, played to support Designs, which the *Gospel* doth, not only not own, but, condemn: I say, that, if these be all taken away; together with a Word or two of mysterious Reasoning, (of which the Bulk of Mankind are not Judges;) nothing of Importance will be found to remain against the *Gospel* itself, or those *Evidences* which support it. And this must be ever accounted a vast Advantage to *Christianity*; as it was delivered, by *Christ*, to the World.

*Concerning impartial Enquiry in Religion: and
the two Extremes of implicit Subjection and
Infidelity.*

S E R M O N X.

Preached at St. Peter's Poor, in Jan. 1712-13.

I T H E S S. v. 21.

Prove all Things: hold fast that which is good.

S E R M. I N my *Former Discourses* upon these *Words*,

X.

I. I have, under the *first General Head*, shewn you the *Duty*, and *Nature*, of a *Just Examination* into our Religion.

II. Under the *second*, I have considered, on *one Side* the *Conduct* of those professed *Christians*, who would impose their own *Additions* to the *Gospel*, as of equal Importance with it; and this by way of such *Authority*, and *Infallibility*, as to demand an *Implicit Subjection*, without any *Enquiries*: And, on the other hand, the *Conduct* of some others, in the contrary Extreme, who seem to have rejected the whole of *Christianity*, under the

Shew,

Shew, but without the Reality, of *Impartial S E R M.*
and *Just Examination.* X.

III. I propose now, to draw some useful *Inferences*, or *Lessons*, from what hath been already said.

1. The *first* that offers itself, is this, That it is but too probable, that many, and especially the Chief, of Those who are in the *former* of the *Two Extremes*, which I have treated of, have no more real Belief of the *Truth* of the *Gospel*; than Those who professedly reject it. I would not be understood to mean, that there may not be many simple, and otherwise honest Men, acting, under *These*, for the bringing all the World to *Implicit Subjection*; who may think that they truly believe the *Gospel*, and are doing God Service: Or that there may not be many sincere Persons amongst those who profess this *Implicit Subjection*. But, if you examine into the great Worldly Interest; the Riches, the Power, the Grandeur, that are supported meerly by these *Additions*; as well as into the Cunning and Understanding of *Those*, who enjoy the greatest Share of these Advantages; and consider how plain a Contradiction, their whole Scheme is, to *Christianity* itself: You cannot forbear suspecting, that all their Zeal against others; all their *Persecution*

198 *Inferences from the foregoing Sermons.*

SERM. of those they call *Heretics*; all their Madness, and Extravagancies; their *Inquisitions*, and *Tortures*; are founded upon *Infidelity*: and that nothing could induce them to be guilty of such Proceedings, but an Opinion that this World is their all; and that there is no Account to be given in another.

That *Truth* is not their Concern, is very plain: Because *Truth* neither wants such *Advocates*, as outward Torments; nor is ever helped by them. An outward Profession may be obtained and forced by them. But then this will be only *Hypocrisy*: For the inward Persuasion will be rather diverted another way, than towards any thing that is to be worked into Men by such Methods. Fire and Faggot; Imprisonment, and Confiscation of Goods; Hardship and Pressure; Hunger and Thirst; Cold and Nakedness; may make Human Nature yield; and extort a Confession from the *Lips*: But the *Heart* will be farther from going along with it, then it would be, were the Methods of Gentleness, and Goodness, applied to it. The only thing, therefore, aimed at, by the great Patrons of *Implicit Submission*, is an outward, uniform, Profession of the same things; *that is*, an *Agreement in Sounds*: Which is no more to *Truth* itself, than the most distant thing in the World,

World. Were the Belief of the *Truth* of the ~~serm.~~
Gospel, the Matter aimed at; or Faith in ~~Je-~~
Jesus Christ, the great Design; nothing of all this
could be seen in the World. But because so
much of this is seen; that whoever will profess
the same Things, and utter the same Sounds
in Public, is safe, and well received by those
who gain most by *Implicit Subjection*: There-
fore, I say, is there little Reason to judge that
any sincere *Belief* of the *Gospel* itself is either
embraced, or aimed at, by Them.

This is so apparent in all those Countries,
where *Implicit Subjection* is at it's Height,
and yet *Polite Learning* flourishes in any De-
gree; that it is a very common and professed,
as well as profane, Notion amongst them-
selves, that *Faith* and *Folly* go together. The
true Account of which, is this, That they
think of no other *Faith*, but that which is
conversant about the monstrous Opinions, and
ridiculous or absurd Tenets, which support the
Power and Riches of their *Ecclesiastical Go-
vernors*: And have lost all Regard to the *Gos-
pel*, in it's Simplicity; and all Desire to en-
quire into it. For,

2. As there is little Reason to suspect any
true *Faith* amongst those, who, either gain
so much of worldly good things, or, avoid so
many worldly Evils, by *Implicit Subjection*:

SERM. So the patronizing such a *Blind Faith* naturally
x. tends to a *Total Infidelity*; as a *Total Infidelity*
tends reciprocally to the Support of such a
Blind Faith, and *Implicit Subjection*. For, Is
it not very evident, that, when Men are kept
in such Ignorance, or in such Dependence,
that they hear little, or nothing at all, of any
other Religion, but of one which sets up an
Infallibility amongst weak and passionate
Men; which is big with such Doctrines, as
Transubstantiation, and the Worship of *Saints*
and *Angels*; which vests Men with a Power
of *indulging* Sins before they are committed,
and absolutely *releasing* Men of their Guilt
after they have been committed; which tends
directly to nothing else, but to magnify the
present Grandeur, and increase the worldly
Pomp and Riches, of its chief Patrons; and
when the Profession of such a *Religion* as
this, is not left to Men's Choice, or to be de-
termined by *Argument*; but is to be forced
upon them by the Application of outward
Evils; which, in many Cases, are terrible,
and next to intoierable, and yet not to be
avoided: I say, when this is the Case, Will
not this View of things incline many to wish,
that *Religion* may all be as much without
Foundation, as these Points which they cannot
embrace, or believe? Will not this Inclina-
tion,

tion, and Worldly Interest, carry them still S E R M. farther: And blind their Eyes, or their x. Hearts, so that they will not see any Difference; but condemn equally, in their Thoughts, all that is called Religion; and cast off that Belief of a *Future State*, and that Expectation of a Judgment to come, which they see others to have cast off before them? Will they not thus be carried away, by Inclination, and worldly Hopes and Fears, to turn *Infidels* first; and then *Implicit Believers*? First, to believe *nothing*, that they may with the more Grace profess to believe *every thing*.

It can hardly be supposed otherwise, amongst those who will not go out of their way far, to search after *Truth*; and have been educated, or find themselves placed, in the midst of a *Religion*, that imposeth such Absurdities, and applies such terrible Instruments of Persuasion: And have Understanding enough to see, that there can be no Ground for such Doctrines, or for such Methods of teaching them. It can hardly be supposed, I say, but that such Persons must incline to a *Disbelief* of every thing; in order to profess all that is required of them: Which can be done by none but such, with so much Grace, and so good an Appearance. Thus doth the Cause of *Implicit Submission*, backed by *Terrors*, and *Torments*, naturally beget *In-*

SE R M. fidelity in the Mind, as well as *Profession* from
x. the Lips: And this *Infidelity*, in order to re-
quite the Kindness, gives itself back again, as
the main Support, and Prop, of every thing
relating to the *Scheme* of Infallibility, and Sub-
mission. It teacheth *Some*, to lay every thing
they can think of, upon their Votaries, or In-
feriors. And it teacheth *Others*, to bear
every thing that can be laid upon them, rather
than to hazard their *all* in this World; which
they take to be their only Concern. It not
only permits; but deviseth, and frames, the
greatest *Usurpations* for the Benefit of *Superiors*.
And not only this: But the same *Infidelity*
frames and fashions, likewise, a Spirit of *Sla-
vish Submission*, and *Outward Subjection*, in *In-
feriors*, ready to receive every such *Usurpation*;
of what Sort, or of what Nature, soever it be.

Thus is true Religion, between the *one
Extreme*, and the *other*, stabbed to the Heart;
and left without Life, or Strength. For the
pleasing Part of Religion to *Almighty God*;
and that, in which alone He delights, being
the *Voluntary Reasonable Submission* of a Man,
to *Him*, and to his *Laws*: Where Force pre-
vails, and the Argument is taken from Ter-
ror, and Human Punishment; what Place
can remain for any Freedom of Choice? And,
without Freedom of Choice, where is *Virtue*,

or *Honour*? and, without *Virtue*, where can be the *Approbation* of God?

S E R M.

X.

Is it not, therefore, an excellent *Topic*, which we often hear of, that these *Methods* of *Severity* keep all things *quiet*; that they enforce an outward *Uniformity*; that they procure an external good Appearance; that they banish all Differences, and Disputes; and the like? But, for *God's* sake, What is all this to *Truth*, and *Religion*: Which are seated within; and are of no account, but as they are chosen, upon due Grounds, by Men? Not but that, with all these *Terrors*, many still are, and must be, the Differences; which often are seen to flame out, to a great degree of Violence. But, What if they did not? Is *Truth* Nothing? Is *Religion*, within a Man's Heart, Nothing? Is Wickedness, or Cruelty, ever the less so, because it keeps Men in Awe? Is the *Power* of some, and the *Vile Submission* of others, the Point aimed at by our *Saviour*? And, Is the *Worship* of his *Father*, in *Spirit*, and in *Truth*, (which He declareth to be what God *seeks after*,) all dwindled into an *External Agreement*; without any Regard either to *Understanding*, or to *Truth*? Are his *Spirit*; and his *Method* of propagating his *Religion*, by preaching his *Doctrine*, and *Works*; found at last to be unworthy of God: And to be exchanged

S E R M. changed for the more rational Method of
x. *Torture, and Terror?* Is all the Poverty, and
Misery, caused by *these* Methods, to be forgot? Is all the *Atheism*, and *Infidelity*, and *Wickedness*, which are occasioned by *these*, not to be charged to the Account? But, a mere *Outward Submission*, and *tacit Subjection*, of *Terrorified Creatures*, to be magnified, as a Blessing; and to be called *Religion*: And the *End* of the *Son of God's* living, and dying, in the World? No, It is impossible to conceive a greater Indignity to *Religion*, than this is: And impossible for any, who understand what they say, to treat it after this Manner, without having first thrown off all the Impressions both of *Reason*, and *Revelation*.

Since, therefore, this *Implicit Subjection* to every thing ordained by fallible Men, cannot be supported and carried forward, but by *Force*, and *Tortures*, and great worldly Inconveniences; and since, when it is so supported, it so evidently tends to worldly Ends only; and since, on these Accounts, it is the great *Introduction* to a *Total Infidelity*, which both teacheth *some* to enjoin it, and *others* to submit to it: It is evident, that it is so far from being a Part of *True Religion*, that it is the greatest Enemy to it; and ends in that *Inward Infidelity*.

Infidelity, the outward Profession of which, it pretends to forbid, and put a stop to.

S E R M.

X.

3. The great Injury, therefore, done to *true Religion*, by both these *Extremes*; and the *Patrons* of them; is plain and evident. The *one* fort, professedly cast it off: Charging upon it Things which it knows nothing of; and many of them, the Corruptions, which *Infidelity* itself hath fixed upon it. And the *other*, do not indeed professedly cast it off: But, under Pretense of supporting it, destroy all inward Sincerity, (without which it is dead,) by outward Force; and introduce an *Hypocrisy*, which must be founded upon a *Disbelief* of all *True Religion*.

The Methods, in which they *Both* deal with it, are highly injurious. *They*, on one side, pretend to talk mightily for it: They magnify it's Glories; and are full of Zeal for it's Honour. But then, they will have no *Questions* asked about it: Which is no great Honour to what they profess themselves to believe as a Truth. But the Reason is, because by *Religion* they mean their own *additional Doctrines*, not to be found in the *Gospels*; (which therefore they will not have too generally looked into:) And such Doctrines as they think may not stand the shock of an Enquiry: but, when they are *weighed in the Balance*, may

SE R M. may be found wanting in some great and
x. essential Points belonging to Truth. While
~~~~ the *Others* charge upon *Religion*, the Faults  
and Abuses of Men ; and bring it into Disre-  
pute that way. This is highly injurious, Be-  
cause *Christianity* itself invites, and desires, our  
*Examination*, and *Trial*; and only as it is  
found to be *Truth*, claims to be received :  
And because nothing ought to suffer, in our  
Judgments, for the sake of what doth not be-  
long to it. Yet, I think, verily, the Injury  
is greater to *Religion*, from *Those*, who forbid  
and hinder all *Enquiries*; than from *Those*,  
who profess to encourage them, tho' them-  
selves are not just and impartial in them : Be-  
cause One, who is under the Direction of the  
*former* sort, hath nothing left but to profess to  
believe equally every thing dictated by his  
Guides ; (no Difference, in Matters proposed  
to Him, being allowed;) whereas, the gene-  
ral and professed Principle of the *Others* may  
lead a Man, without *their* Prejudices, to a sin-  
cere Enquiry into the *Gospel* ; and to an hear-  
ty Profession of it. But, tho' the *Injustice* of  
both these Methods of Proceeding, be mani-  
fest ; yet,

4. I must observe, that, amongst such as  
think justly, and will be but at a little Pains  
in so important a Matter, *Christianity* itself  
will

will receive no Disadvantage from either of S E R M. them. For, when a Man comes to examine, x. and finds that the *Gospel* itself refuseth not the Light, and loves not Darkness ; that, on the contrary, it gives Encouragement to honest Minds to *try*, and *see*, whether it be not worthy of God : A Person, I say, who finds this, will not put it upon a Level with any *Religion*, which hates the Light ; which refuses and condemns all *Examination* into it ; which relies upon *Force*, more than upon *Argument* ; and allows not to any the least Judgment concerning what concerns them so much. When, in the Prosecution of this *Enquiry*, the Man finds that the *Doctrine* of it is so far from being absurd, that it is highly reasonable ; so far from tending to any base worldly Purposes, that it only promotes the true, and lasting, Interest of all Mankind equally : He will not place it to the Disadvantage of such a *Religion*, that *Some*, who profess to own it, promulgate and enforce upon Men, *Doctrines*, absurd in themselves ; pernicious to the World ; and tending to aggrandize the *Imposers* only. When He finds the *Miracles* that support it, beneficent, great, open, Acts ; done in the Sight, often of Adversaries, and always, of Competent Witnesses : They will not suffer, in his Opinion, for

S E R M. for the sake of pretended *Miracles*; done in a  
x. Corner; before only Friends; and Those  
whose worldly Interest they support. The  
great Difference, I say, will, by these means,  
presently appear, to an *Impartial Man*, be-  
tween a *Religion* that loves to appear in the  
*Light*; and one that *worketh in Darkness*.  
Nay, the unjust Procedure for the Support of  
the *one*, will be an Advantage to the *other*:  
And help to satisfy him, that the *Gospel*,  
which useth different Means, and very contra-  
ry Methods, of recommending itself to the  
World, hath not any of those Marks of *Cheat*,  
or even Suspicion, upon it, which will ever  
stick upon any Religion, that requires a *Blind*  
*Submission* to every thing it enjoins.

Again, When the *Enquiry*, and *Examina-  
tion*, of an honest Man, convinces him,  
that there are none of those *Tricks*, and *Follies*,  
*Absurdities*, and *Contradictions*; in the *Gospel*  
itself, which some Persons generally so much  
talk of, when they are designing to bring a  
Disrepute upon it: He will think it a great Ad-  
vantage to *Christianity*, that *They*, who would  
disgrace it, do not think it fitting to treat it, as  
they find it delivered by its *Author* to the  
World; but bring in Matters, wholly foreign  
to it; and not so much encouraged by it, as  
by any *Religion*, or *Infidelity*, that is, or can  
be,

be, set up in Opposition to it. And, as SERM. he finds no such Things in the *Gospel*, as are sometimes urged as an *Inducement* to a *Disbelief* of it: So, He will be apt to conclude, that They, who are Adversaries to it, could find but little amiss in itself, and but little to object against it, taken either from the Life, or Doctrine, or Works, of its *Author*; when they are obliged to have recourse to Doctrines, and Stories, which have no Foundation in them, in order to weaken its Credibility.

Thus may the *Procedure* of Men; which is unjust in itself, and of bad Consequence with weak Minds, tend to settle the Judgments of more considering Persons, in Favour of *Christianity*. That which was designed to overcloud the *Gospel*, may make its Glory shine. That which was intended for the Temporal Ends of Worldly Men, may advance the eternal Good of those who are sincere and upright: And, that which was designed to pull down, may build up. The Errors, and Follies of *Some*; the Insincerity, and Madness of *Others*; the Partiality, and Injustice of *Others*; may all administer an Occasion to an honest and sincere *Enquirer*, to believe and practise that *Gospel*, which He finds, in itself, free from those *Errors*, and *Barbarity*, which *Some* would place upon a Level with it; as well as

S E R M. from those *Follies* and *Wickednesses*, which  
x. *Others* would charge upon it.

5. One more *Inference* I shall make, from what hath been already said ; and that a very interesting one, and very important to all *Christians* ; *viz.* Since we see that the greatest *Objections* against *Christianity* itself, are taken from the *Conduct* of *Christians*, and of *Those* who pretend to believe and receive it ; since we see that the main of what is insinuated against the *Gospel*, is taken from the Behaviour of *Those*, who profess it : since all their foolish Notions, or Additions to it ; all their furious Zeal and Madness ; all the Violence and Ill-will against others ; all that is bad amongst professed *Christians* ; is perpetually made Matter of *Objection* against *Christ* himself, and his *Religion* : How unreasonable, and unjust soever this be ; yet, how much doth it behove us all, not to give an Handle, or Occasion, to any, who wish not well to the *Gospel* itself, to attack it through our Weaknesses, Follies, or Passions ?

We must consider, that We are not guiltless of their Unreasonableness in thus dealing with the *Gospel*, on our Accounts : If we unnecessarily, or unreasonably, lay Stumbling-blocks in their Way ; and prejudice them, by any Conduct of ours, against the way of Salvation.

tion. For, as all *wicked Christians*, must ex- ~~S E R M.~~  
pect to answer, at the great Day of Judgment, x.  
for their Sins, and Wickednesses; not only as  
they respect *themselves*, but *others* also; not only as  
they are *Trangressions* of their holy  
Law, but as they tend effectually to make  
Men blaspheme that holy Name, by which  
they are called; not only as they make *Them-  
selves* guilty before God, but as they are seen  
to encourage, or promote, what is bad in  
*Others*: So, must all *Christians*, who teach,  
for the *Commandments* of *God*, the *Doctrines* of  
*Men*; who make their own *Additions* to the  
*Gospel*, of equal Importance, and Authority,  
with the *Gospel* itself; who bind upon Men heavy  
Burthens of their own contriving; who enlarge  
the *Faith* once delivered to the *Saints*, or contract  
the *Charity* absolutely enjoyned to *Christians*:  
So, must all, I say, who act this Part, expect  
to be judged, at the last Day, not only for  
their great *Presumption*, as it respects *Them-  
selves*; but for the evil *Effect* of it upon  
*Others*; for the *Infidelity*, and *Atheism*, and  
*Wickedness*, which, by means of their Misbe-  
haviour, hath entered into the *World*.

How little Prejudice would there be left, in  
the Minds of the Worst of Men, against the  
*Gospel of Christ*, if nothing were found amongst  
*Christians*, but what is to be found there; if

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S E R M. the *Spirit* of the *Gospel* were always seen, x. where the Profession of it is; if the *Gospel* itself were truly the *Creed*, and the *Law*, to *Christians*; the only Measure of their *Faith*, and the only Rule of their Actions; and if Love and Benevolence swallowed up, or covered, all lesser Differences, amongst those of the same Denomination: How few, I say, would there then be left, of the *common Topsicks* against *Christ's Religion*; and how many of those Handles, which unreasonable Men lay hold on, against it, would then be taken away?

But, when another Scene is perpetually before the Eyes of the World; when many of the *Stewards* of *Christ's Dispensation*, make themselves *Lords* and *Masters*, and claim an equal *Authority* with *Christ* himself, whose *Stewards* only *they* are; when *These* are found *beating their Fellow-servants*, (as the *Parable* expresseth it,) and abusing them, when they should be giving *them their Meat in due Season*; when *Worldly Ends* are brought into the most *Heavenly Religion* that ever appeared amongst Men; and any *Doctrine*, tho' never so absurd, if it be for the Increase of Power or Riches, is enforced upon Men, by the severest *Penalties* of this present World; and all, under the common Name of *Him*, whose King-  
d<sup>m</sup>

dom is not of this World; when the *Faith* of Christians is new settled, by weak and fallible Men, many hundreds of Years after Christ left it settled by Himself; and the *Charity* of Christians so confined, by these new Settlements, and by the *Decrees* of those who make them, that Christians of later Ages have been as effectually known by their hating and abusing one another, as their great *Master* desired they should be, by their *loving one another*: When this is the Case, I say, then we find *Infidelity* gaining Strength, not from any *Arguments* of its own, but from those which it draws from the Conduct of professed *Believers*; and many induced to doubt of, or cast off, the *Whole*, (which they are not at Leisure thoroughly to examine,) for the sake of these *additional Evils*; which, tho' not belonging to Christianity itself, yet, will ever be treated of, by the Enemies of it, in such a Manner, as if they did.

Thus, it is probable enough, that Julian himself became an *Apostate*, from the Christians of his Time, rather, than from Christianity itself: I mean, that their Behaviour growing then worse and worse, and especially their Animosities against one another, occasioned his Relapse; and provoked the unthinking Man to what He could not have been moved to,

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SE R M. upon the same Accounts, had he consulted  
x. the Gospel only, and the Conduct of that  
Master, whom they professed to follow. And  
how much, how very much, of the *Atheism*,  
and *Infidelity*, of these later Ages, hath the  
*Church of Rome* to answer for? Whose *Additional Articles of Faith*, and *Rules of Discipline*, backed with the Terrors of this World,  
and fixed upon *Christ* himself by his *pretended Vicegerents*, cannot but, with Men who  
think enough to see their Falshood and Barba-  
rity, and yet not enough to distinguish between  
them, and *Christianity* itself, weigh down the  
Scale to the side of a *Total Infidelity*: Which  
must be charged, not only upon the *Infidels*  
themselves, but upon all who have given them  
this Handle.

*Christians* cannot too often think of that  
Denunciation of their *Master's*; *Wo be to the World, because of Offenses*: i. e. Great Mis-  
chief, and Evil, will come to Men, by *Stum-  
bling-blocks*, laid in the way of the *Gospel*;  
over which They will fall; and be themselves  
condemned, for not taking more Care and  
walking with more Caution. *For it must needs be that Offenses will come*: i. e. For, such is  
the Corruption; and such are the various  
Passions, and Designs, of Mankind, that they  
will often lay such *Stumbling-blocks* in the way

of their Brethren. But, *Wo be to that Man by S E R M.*  
*whom they come. Wo to that Man, or that Church,* x.  
*or Body of Men;* who, without Reason, and  
without Authority, cast in the Way such *Stum-  
bling-blocks,* as are the occasion of falling to  
Others; the occasion of their turning out of the  
Paths of *Christianity* itself. This one Declaration  
of our *Lord's*, should, methinks, make all Per-  
sons afraid of deviating one Step from those  
*Lines* which He hath marked out in his *Gospel*;  
or of venturing to enforce upon Men, any  
thing which is not truly and plainly *His*.

Our *Church*, which was reformed from  
*Povery*; not upon the Bottom of *Infallibility*,  
or *Incontestable Authority*, but upon that of  
*Appealing to Christ* himself, in his *Gospel*;  
professeth, that the *Scriptures* are the *Rule* to  
all *Christians*; and that nothing can be lawfully  
required of them, to *believe*, or *practise*, as  
peculiar to their *Religion*, but what is in  
*Them* plainly enjoyned. If any, therefore, of  
the professed Members of this *Church*, have  
gone farther; either pretending to *Powers*,  
which the *Gospel* gives them not; or imposing  
*Systems* of *Religion*, about which the *Gospel*  
is not express; either enforcing *doubtful* things,  
as *certain*; or Matters, not made necessary by  
*Christ*, as of Necessity to eternal Salvation: It  
is plain, the main and general Principle, by

216 *Inferences from the foregoing Sermons.*

SERM. which the Church itself desires, and declares,  
x. that all ought to be conducted, doth by no  
means bear them out; but indeed condemns  
and disapproves them.

Let us, therefore, consider, seriously, that as often as we forsake this *Rule*; as often as we pretend to be *Wise above what is written*; and, in any degree, or any sort, to add to *Christ's Laws*, or new model his *Doctrines*; as often as we do, in any Measure, approach to the *Violence*, or *Cruelty*, or *Censure*, which we constantly condemn in *others*, when they practise them against *ourselves*; as often as we abuse and vilify our Brethren, *judging others before the Time*, instead of *judging ourselves*; as often as we make, what should be the Subject of *Charity*, and *mutual Forbearance*, the Cause of *Unchristian Fires*, and *Unchristian Animosities*, against One another; in a word, that as often as our *Lives* contradict, in any known Instance, the *Moral Laws* of our *Religion*; or our *Understandings* set themselves up for *Infallible*, or *Decisive*, *Guides* to all others: That, so often we are probably making our *Religion* itself suffer in the Opinion of *others*; raising up new Enemies to God, or making his old Enemies, a-new *Blaspheme*; and laying such *Stumbling-blocks* in Mens way, as may be fatal to many about us. Let us consider this seriously;

ously ; together with the great Work we have SERM. upon our own own Hands, to prepare ourselves for that tremendous Day, when we hope that God will not be *Extreme* to mark *what is amiss* in ourselves : And We shall not easily be induced to have any Hand, upon any Pretense whatsoever, in setting Men at a Distance from that *Holy Gospel*, by which otherwise they might be made happy ; or, in increasing that *Infidelity*, which might otherwise happily end in embracing the *same Faith*, and laying hold on the *same Hope of Salvation*, which We have ourselves embraced, through *Jesus Christ*, our Lord.

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*The present Delusion of many Protestants, considered.*

## S E R M O N XI.

Preached at St. Peter's Poor, Novemb. 5, 1715.

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2 THESS. ii. 11.

*And for this Cause God shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie.*

S E R M. **T**HIS Day hath so just a Title to every  
xi. Sentiment, and every Signification, of  
~~ Joy and Gratitude, We can possibly  
entertain or express, as We are *Christians*, as  
We are Protestants, and as We are Men; that I  
could heartily wish that every Thought and  
every Token of Uneasiness, might be banished  
far from it. But since it is so, that it bears upon  
it, not only the Signatures of God's repeated  
Mercy to this Nation; but the Marks of an In-  
gratitude and Stupidity, perhaps not to be e-  
qualled in all History: Since it doth not more  
effectu-

effectually call to our Mind that Great WO-  
DER of Providence, to which it gave a Begin-  
ning within our own Memory, and which our  
own Eyes have seen compleated; than it  
points out to us that Scene of Iniquity and Re-  
bellion, which is now opened, in order to per-  
plex and unravel that lovely Frame of Things,  
which Heaven it self hath wrought for us: The  
Commemoration of the Blessings of this  
Day, cannot but lead our Thoughts, at pre-  
sent, to the Attempts of Those, who would  
rob us, and all our Posterity, of them; and  
must create in us an Astonishment, mixed with  
Pity and Indignation, at the Conduct of many  
amongst Us, from whom the Ties of Reli-  
gion, the Solemnity of Oaths, the Security of  
all that is valuable in this World, the Interest  
of their Native Country, and all the Obliga-  
tions of Honour, and Conscience, required and  
demanded another manner of Behaviour.

It is a Conduct, indeed, which can hardly  
be resolved into any thing, but a *Fatal Delu-  
sion*, sent down upon them, as a just Punish-  
ment of their Ingratitude for the greatest Pub-  
lic Happiness that every any Nation enjoyed;  
and will at least give us a sensible Demonstra-  
tion, that, as in Religion, according to the  
*Apostle*, a perverse and wilful Opposition to  
*Truth*, naturally, as well as by the Justice of  
God,

SE R M. God, leads, in the End, to a Belief, and Confidence, in every Thing absurd, and unreasonable: So, in worldly Matters, Ingratitude, and Insensibility, under the Publick Blessings of Providence, lead Men, step by step, to mistake Evil for Good ; to court Misery for Happiness ; and to pursue their own Ruine, under the Notion of something desireable : And that, in both Cases, it is but just in Almighty God, to punish Men for their wilful Baseness of Spirit, by leaving them entirely to the Conduct of it ; and, in the *Scripture Phrase*, to send Them, who will not know the Value of Truth or Happiness, freely offered to them, *a strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie* ; and be led blindfold, by the greatest Absurdities, against all the Evidences of Reason, and Experience, into the Paths of Ruine and Destruction. Nor were there ever indeed more surprizing Instances of this, than what our own Eyes may, at this Time, behold, in this Kingdom.

The Wonder is not, that the professed Members of the *Church of Rome*, unite their Hearts and Hands ; and leave no Methods, whether of Deceit or Violence, unattempted, for the Service of that Cause, which, in all their lowest Fortunes, they never suffer to be removed out of their Sight ; that *They* put on all the Forms of Complaisance, and Dissimulation,

tion ; of Civility and Good Humour, even to ~~S E R M.~~  
Hereticks themselves, to inveigle them into ~~S E R M.~~ xi.   
their own Ruine ; that They flatter, and pro-  
mise, and swear, every thing that is good and  
kind, to their Fellow-labourers ; and, at the  
same time, enter into all the Resolutions of De-  
struction, and Desolation, whenever the Op-  
portunity of Power shall come. This is no-  
thing, but what is worthy of Themselves, and  
of that *Church*, to the Slavery of which They  
have devoted themselves. It is no more, than  
what They fairly, and publickly, profess ; if  
*Protestants* will but open their Eyes, and see it.  
It is their Religion, and their Conscience : It is  
inculcated upon them, as the Great Condition  
of their Acceptance with God, That no Good-  
nature of their own ; no Obligations from o-  
thers ; no Ties of Oaths, and solemn Assur-  
ances ; no Regards to Truth, Justice, or Ho-  
nour ; are to restrain Them from any thing,  
let it be of what sort soever, that is for the  
Security, or Temporal Advancement, of their  
*Church*.

The Case with *Them* is not, as it is with  
*Protestants*, who, to their Shame, have indeed  
been unmerciful to one another, on all Sides :  
But then, their mutual Violences have been ra-  
ther the sudden Effects of Passion and Revenge ;  
And still there hath been a Principle left, by

**S E R M.** which, in the Time of calm and cool Reflexion,  
 xi. there may be Hope of curing so great an Evil.  
 And every Sort of them, when they are undermost, disown, and disclaim, the Lawfulness of all such Proceedings.

But in the *Romish Church*, it is firmly settled, upon never-altered Principles ; it is an Established *Article* of Religion ; equally believed, and owned, and inculcated, in their Adversity, and low Estate, as in the Height of their Power. It stands unrepealed, upon Record ; and it is confirmed by Experience, that *They* are most likely not to fail of the Honours of Saintship, and the Applauses of that *Church*, who act the most uniformly, and the most steadily, upon that Foundation. Every Weapon they use, is sanctified ; every Instance of Fraud, and Perfidiousness ; every Degree of Violence, and Fury ; is consecrated. It is not only allowed ; but first recommended, and afterwards rewarded.

This, therefore, is not the Wonder, that Men devoted to such a *Church*, keep up to their antient Character, and Profession ; that *They* don't deflect a Step from the Glories of their *Illustrious Ancestors* ; that *They* are not at all moved by the Peace and Interest of their Country ; nor by that Security and Quiet, which even *Themselves* might enjoy, by the

Indul-

Indulgence of a Government They will not ~~S E R M.~~  
Support ; that *They* are still the same implacable  
Adversaries ; and still set on Fire, by the  
Principles, and the Zeal, of their Religion, to  
scatter Ruine, and Destruction, round about  
them ; and to deprive their Neighbours of e-  
very thing that is Good and Valuable.

xi.

But the wonder is, that so Many of Those, who call themselves Protestants ; and of Those, who have violently wrested the Name of *Church-men*, out of the Hands of their Brethren, and appropriated it to themselves, as its only Advocates and Patriots ; of Those, whose Cares for its Interest, and Fears for its Safety, have been swelled and magnified, above those of all around them, to a degree almost Romantic ; and even of some, amongst them, who have solemnly given their Faith to the *present Establishment*, and not only sworn themselves to *That*, but abjured all contrary Pretensions : That so many, I say, who will take it amiss not to be called *Protestants*, and much more amiss, not to be called *Church-men*, have shewn too great a Readiness to joyn, some, their Hands, some their Hearts, and some, their Indifference, with the worst of Enemies, in the worst of Causes ; and to be deluded themselves, as well as help to delude others, into utter Destruction, by the weakest, and most groundless Insinuations, and all

S E R M. all the most absurd Methods, that ever any Cause  
 xi. was supported, and propagated by. It cannot, therefore, but be of use, at this Time, to consider more particularly,

I. The *Cause*, now openly avowed by our Enemies.

II. The *Marks of a strong Delusion*, in the *Behaviour of Those*, whom I have just now mentioned, with relation to it.

I. The *Cause* is now openly avowed. It is no longer either denied, or dissembled. It is, to set upon the Throne of these Kingdoms, a *Pretender*, at whose first Appearance in the World, the whole Nation of *Protestants*, of all Parties, and all Orders, and all Degrees, was filled with universal Dissatisfaction, and Uneasiness, by the Concurrence of all the suspicious Circumstances that could well be united in one Matter of Fact ; and whose *Imaginary Title* our Laws abhor, as absolutely inconsistent with Themselves, and ruinous to our whole Constitution : And not only this, but a *Pretender*, who, to make Him the fitter to govern this *Protestant* Nation, and to be the Patron of this *Protestant* Church, hath received all his first, and deepest Impressions, from *That of Rome*, to which He hath devoted Himself with an uncommon Bigotry.

And

And this *Church*, from which alone He hath learned all his Obligations, and every thing that He accounts *Religion*, is the Same, which keeps up an eternal Claim to the *Riches*, as well as the *Obedience*, of this Nation : The same, which hath assured Him, with the assumed Authority of God himself, that He not only *may*, but *must*; that it is not only *lawful*, but his *Duty*, by all the Methods of *Diffimulation* and *Force*, to extirpate *Heresy* out of our Religion, or Our selves out of the World : the Same, which hath taught Him, that Promises, and Professions, made to *Hereticks*, in order to the obtaining his End, are good, and laudable ; but, after *that* is obtained, become *Sin*, *by being observed*: the Same, in one Word, which knows no Virtue, but, that which is the Meanest Vice and Disgrace of Human Nature, a blind Submission of the Conscience to Man's Authority, where Man can have no Authority ; and which knows no Vice, but, that which is the Supreme Virtue and Glory of an Understanding Being, the *standing fast in that Religious Liberty*, with which Almighty God, both by the Law of Nature, and the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, *bath made us Free* ; that *Freedom of Choice*, and Honest Use of our Reason, (the neglected Gift of God,) which alone can render

S E R M. der the Religion of a Man, acceptable in his  
xi. Eyes.

~~~~~ If the Impressions of this, are so much decayed with Any amongst Us, that They ask, *Where*, or *When*, That Church hath taught Him all this: Let any of its Advocates, answer, and tell us, *Where*, or *When*, that *Church* ever taught the contrary: Let them name any one Instance, in which, the public Authority, or the most celebrated Writers, of that *Church*, ever disapproved or condemned; or ever did not encourage, and applaud, any sort of Wickedness for their own Temporal Interest: Let them shew us, where their Leaders inculcate it, as an Indispensable Duty, that *Oaths* taken, and *Promises* solemnly made, to Such as they please to account *Hereticks*, are to be Religiously observed: Let them produce their Authentic Condemnations, and Anathematizations, of Those of their own *Church*, who have dealt in all the Arts of *Perfidiousness* and *Cruelty*, to enlarge, or recover, Dominion, and Riches. This might justly be expected; if it were just to expect what is impossible.

They themselves know that this is no Imaginary *Sayr*, merely to embellish a Discourse; or to raise the Passions of Men: but that it is too plain to all, who will open their Eyes, and

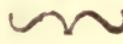
see. It is writ too deep in Characters of Blood, ~~S E R M.~~
and Ruine, to be so much as denied even by xi.
Themselves, that the Methods, of *Diffimulation*,
to inveigle unhappy Men into a Trust and
Confidence; of *Perfidiousness*, to cut in sun-
der the Ties of all Security; of *Barbarities*,
and *Inhumanities*, in cold Blood, and upon ma-
ture Deliberation, have been all consecrated to
Glory; blessed, applauded, and rewarded, by
the Public Voice of that Church: Whose true,
and legitimate Son, we acknowledge *Him* to
be, who now claims our Destruction, as his
Right; and comes forth to assert it, Sanctified
by the Benedictions, and prepared by the Les-
sons, of so Holy a Mother; and fired with
the Madness of Revenge, made Ten times
Hotter by the Fury of such a Religion. This
is a short View of that *Scene* of things, which
not only *may*, but *must come*, if the *Cause* now
avowed by our Enemies should be crowned with
Power and Opportunity.

One would think, indeed, if either the Sense
of Feeling, or of Gratitude, were not wholly
dead amongst Us, it might be enough to al-
arm the coldest Breast to think only upon
what the same *Cause* professeth, and attempts,
to remove from Us. To deprive Us, of a KING,
who is possessed of all the Royal and Humane
Virtues, that any Nation could wish to see U-

S E R M. nited in a Gouvernour; and possessed of them, xi. in so great a degree, that were his *People* but as ~~~~~ willing to be made happy, as *He* is, to make them so, nothing upon Earth could equal the Blessings of his Reign; of a KING, who hath given the World, the sensible and certain Demonstration of Experience, that no Heighth of Power can corrupt the Equity of his Nature, or disorder the Temper of His Soul: To deprive Us of such a KING; and with Him, of a PRINCE, whose Noble Pasſion for the true Interest of this Nation, makes His Name dear to every true *Briton*, and every True *Protestant*: Of a PRINCESS, Whose Private Virtues give Light, and Pleasure to all around Her; and Whose Greatness of Soul taught Her long ago, to disdain the Allurements of *Popery*, tho' clothed in all this World's Majesty, and Glory: And of a Numerous Race, to be formed for the support of our Religion, and Liberties, by these Examples: Such a *Scene of Good*, in Possession, as Few Nations upon Earth have ever experienced! And such a View of *Good* to come, as calls the *Blessings of Future Times* into *our own*; and adds to the Happiness of the Present Generation, a *Taste* of the Happiness of their Posterity! And, what is this, in other Words, but, to deprive Us of every present Good, and every

every future Hope, of *Protestants, Britons, and s E R M. Men?*

XI.

If we sum it up, therefore, and shew it in  one View; the *Cause* now entered into, by our Enemies, is, To remove from Us, a KING whose *Right* is the very Essence, Band, and Fundamental Law, of *Society*; and whose Inclination, Nature, and Religion, all conspire to make Him the Father of his People, delighting in their Happiness, as in his own: And to place in his stead, a *Pretender*, whose Imaginary *Title* is founded upon the very Supposition of our *Ruine*; and Who, if He were possessed of all the Good Qualities with which His Best Friends could wish, at this time, to paint Him out, yet, is Himself possessed by such a *Religion*, as must destroy them all; such a *Religion*, as teacheth Him not to expect either Favour from Those who profess it here, or Mercy from God hereafter, unless He makes the Destruction, both of our *Church* and *State*, the Great Busines of his Life, whenever He hath Power in his Hands: Nay, assures Him of the Wrath both of God and Man, should He be so *Wicked*, as ever to think of observing those *Protestations*, or keeping those *Promises*, which are only allowed to delude unwary Men into their own *Ruine*. This is the Aspect, which it hath upon our selves, at present,

S E R M. And then, for the future, It is not only to
xi. remove from Us, those *Royal Pledges* of Good
to come, which our Eyes now behold ; but it
is to banish far out of our Sight, the most dis-
tant Prospect of any Protestant Royal Family,
for ever ; and to place over Us, a long Chain
of Popish Successors, never to be dissolved, or
interrupted ; in which the latter Branches may
be sure to compleat any Part of our Ruine, in
which the Former may have failed. So that it
is, in deed, and in truth, to rob Us, and our
latest Posterity, of every thing We can Value,
in this World ; and, at the same time, of all
Thought of ever enjoying it again : And it is,
to bring upon Us, and upon all after Us, every
Evil that Human Nature ought most to fear,
without so much as the faint Glimmering of any
Hope of Future Redress.

This is the *Cause* now set on foot by our E-
nemies. And, I am very sure, not aggravated,
beyond Truth ; because it is a *Cause*, too bad to
be capable of Aggravation. No Colours can
make it more black, than it is, in it self. No
Words can represent it worse, than it represents
it self now to the World, supported by the
Zeal of *Papery* : whose only Strength lies in the
One Comprehensive Principle, of Holy Perfi-
diousness, and Iniquity ; which tears every
Good Principle up by the Roots, and sanctifies
and

and strengthens every bad one. I might have S E R M. placed before your Eyes, a Scene of those E- vils, which the constant Experience of this Nation it self, as well as of All around Us, assures Us, have always accompanied it. But I chose rather to shew it in another Light; that Such as are deluded with the smooth Words, and fair Promises, of its Advocates, may be convinced, from those Obligations of Religion, and Conscience, which it layeth upon its Disciples, that It not only always was, in fact, so fatal, wherever it hath prevailed; but *never can be otherwise*. And yet, even with respect to this *Cause*; the Worst, in all its Circumstances, that any Nation under Heaven can be witness to; how astonishing is the Conduct of Many, who call themselves *Protestants*, and perhaps think Themselves so? Let us now, therefore, consider,

II. The Marks of a *strong Delusion*, in the Behaviour of Those, who join either their *Hands*, or their *Hearts*, or their *Indifference*, to carry on the Work of our Worst Enemies; whilst they expect to be thought *Protestants*, and *Churchmen*. And,

1. How strong a *Delusion* must be upon the Minds of those Men, who have shewn themselves as ready to swallow all the most ridiculous,

S E R M. and groundless Stories ; as the Disciples of *Popery* xi. have been to invent, and propagate them ?

W W If one reflects upon what hath passed amongst Us of late : one would be apt to think, that the whole Conduct of the *Machine* for making and distributing *False Reports* to the Credulous People, had been lodged, and entrusted, with the Managers of the *Popish Cause*, in this Kingdom. I forbear to look back farther. It is enough to remember, that *His Majesty* had no sooner taken Quiet Possession of that *Throne*, which God hath given *Him*, but that all the Scandal, and Infamy ; every thing that could tend to make *Himself*, and his *Illustrious Family*, contemptible, or hateful, was scattered about, with a Diligence and Zeal almost incredible. No matter how inconsistent ; how self-contradictory ; how much beyond the common size of Credibility ; from that Day to this, it hath been dealt about, with so uninterrupted an Industry, that, I believe, no Age ever was witness to so many, and so extravagant Inventions of Malice, crowded into so short a Period of Time : And every one of them so visibly, and palpably, framed to serve the *Cause of Popery* ; and so hugged, and enjoyed, by the *Papists* ; (who all the while are laughing at the Credulity of their *Fellow-Labourers* ;) that no *Protestants*, of what Church soever, but such

such as are wilfully, or fatally, blind to their S E R M. own Preservation, could shew that Greediness, xi. which hath been observed, in swallowing, and ~~and~~ spreading all the *Fictions* of their *Worst Enemies*; and that resolute Backwardness to believe the contrary, to which even their own Senses might be Witnesses. I have an Eye particularly now, to that Heap of *Mean*, and *Low Calumny*; to that immense Number of the most groveling Falshoods, (not fit to be mentioned) calculated for the *Populace*; some for a Week, some for a Day, or even for an Hour: in order to alienate their Affections from their only true Interest, and to turn their Passions another way.

2. But this alone would not do. The Great Artifice of the *Romanists*, who are ever obliged, in Conscience, to keep our Ruine in their Eye, hath been to give a false Scent to Many *Protestants*, who might otherwise join in opposing their constant Designs; to turn their Jealousies to Shadows of their own raising; and, in order to remove their Thoughts from real Danger, to make them *Fear, where no Fear is.* And, acting this part, with their usual Dexterity, in conjunction with the Fire of Ambition in *Some*, and the Consciousness of Guilt in *Others*; they have had too much Success in it, amongst Those, who seem little to care what becomes

SERM. becomes of the Public, if *Themselves* be not
xi. pleased in all things.

~~ I shall mention only *One*, or *Two*, of the most remarkable Instances of this. In order to turn the Jealousies of weak Men, from their own *Quarter*, upon the *Government* it self, it hath been one Great Piece of their Art, to represent all Attempts in favour of the *Pretender*, as *Chimæras*, and Impossible Imaginations; and, at the same time, to give Assurances to all trusty and faithful Friends, that the Attempt was certain, and too deeply laid, to miscarry. This, they knew, would be of service to Them, two ways. The *One* Part of it would keep up the Hearts, and Spirits, of the Friends of his Cause; and prepare Them for his Assistance: Nay, and increase their Number, and their Insolence. And the *Other*, would be sure to bring *Reproaches* upon any such Preparations of Defense, as would be absolutely necessary to oppose such an Attempt. This was carried farther: even to the charging, or insinuating, Designs of *Arbitrary Power*, to be supported by an Army, here at Home. So that this was the *Hard Lot* of Those, who had the Care of the Nation in their Trust. If They made no Provision for our Security, before such an *Attempt* was opened; our Enemies might the better promise *Themselves Success*. And if they did; the same

same Enemies were sure to Tax them with ~~S E R M.~~
such Designs, as might Fire the *People* against ~~xi.~~
their *Rightful King*: the Consequence of ~~which~~
which, They well knew, would be, to dis-
pose them the more readily to receive the *Pretender*. But what a *Delusion* must this be? For, as, on the one side, The greatest En-
emies of the *King* cannot name any one thing
that looks like so much as a Disposition that
way; and, as He hath given *Us*, and all *Eu-
rope*, the greatest Proofs, and the greatest Se-
curity, of the contrary: So, on the other side,
They suffer themselves to be persuaded to throw
themselves headlong into the *Arms of Arbitrary
Power*, under Pretense of running from it.
For this is certain, that, should the *Cause* of the
Pretender ever succeed, it is so big with the
Miseries of *Popery* and *Revenge*, that nothing
but *Arbitrary Power* can possibly support it:
nor will it ever trust itself here again, under
the Influences of *Law*, and *Liberty*.

But the Great, and perhaps the most Pre-
vailing; I am sure, the most Astonishing, *De-
lusion* of all, is, *That* of those *Protestants*, who
suffer the *Papists* to possess them with an Im-
aginary Fear about the Security of the *Church of
England*; and then, with blinded Eyes, and
darkened Understandings, to expect its greater
Security, in the *Pretender's Cause*. This, I should
think

S E R M. think enough to cure any *Protestant* of this Jealousy ; that, from the beginning of that Groundless Cry, it was very observable that the Sons of the *Church of Rome*, joined with their loudest Zeal and Noise, in it. For, what a shameless Insult is this upon the Common Sense of Mankind, for *Them* to put on an Air of Concern, and Tenderness, for a *Church*, which they not only Hate, with an implacable Hatred ; but which, it is a Meritorious Part of their Religion, to destroy from the Earth. I would appeal to any of the most deluded *Protestants*, who will but promise to recollect their Thoughts for a Moment, whether the *Papists* joining in spreading this Jealousy of the Danger of a *Church*, which they Hate, be not a certain Proof, that They think it really in a Flourishing Condition ; much too secure for their Designs, and their Interest, unless, by such frightful Fictions, They can entice *Protestants* themselves to join with them, in it's Destruction.

It is fruitless to observe to such *Protestants*, unless They will lay aside their strong Prejudices against their own Interest, that the Worst Enemies of the KING, and the *Administration*, cannot produce one Instance, I will not say, of an Injury, but of any Disregard, to this *Church* ; but might produce many, if they would be so just, of the contrary : As many,

as in so short a Time could be possibly given. S E R M.
But if they resolve to swallow all the ground- XI.
less Jealousies of this sort; yet, what a degree ~~~
of Infatuation must it be, to think of *Security*,
where there *can* be none? To fly from the I-
maginary Suspicion, to the real Certainty of
Ruine? To run from Those, who, they weak-
ly suspect, *may*; to Those, who, They know,
must, destroy it? Or, Is there any new League
of strict Love and Friendship, now made, be-
tween the *Church of Rome*, and *Us*? and tied
by closer Bonds than *Protestations*, and *Promises*,
which it is their Duty, to break, as soon as
They can? or, Is all the Cunning and *Policy*
of *Rome* sunk at last into this, of furnishing Mo-
ney, and Arms; and of hazarding the Lives,
and the Estates, of her true Sons, in this Na-
tion; out of pure Love and Kindness to the
Church of England, and solely to Establish *That*
upon a lasting and strong Foundation? Or, do
Men trust once more to *Vows*, and *Affurances*?
If they do, They trust to what the Experience
of this Nation hath felt to be No Security;
and what their Enemies themselves profess to be
none. And, do They think that the Number
of *Romanists*, who venture their *All* in this
World, for the Service of the *Pretender's* Cause,
have not had much better *Affurances* and *Secu-
rity*, that *Their Interest*, and *Their Religion*, is
to

S E R M. to Reign in Triumph in this Land, before they
xi. would engage themselves, in so desperate a
manner? But, I confess, I should not wonder
if *They*, who can come to be so deluded, as
to think their *Church* secure, in the Method of
Utter Destruction, should come to believe that
the *British Papists* are inflamed with a Zeal for
the *Church of England*; and undergo all the Fa-
tigues, and Hardships, and Dangers, of a *Re-
bellion*; not to Establish, or serve, *their own
Church*, which *They* love to Death; but the
Church of England, which they Hate with an
immortal Hatred. Even *this* may not be too
hard for the Faith of Those, who can trust to
any Promises and Vows of Good, or Security,
to any *Protestant Church* upon Earth, from
such as cannot, and, indeed, dare not, keep
them.

3. The same Persons may be *deluded*, if they
resolve upon it, by the reproachful Word of
Foreigners, and Strangers to our Laws; and the
like; cast upon our *Royal Family*: without con-
sidering, how nearly, and how certainly, *They*
are descended from our *Kings*; Or, without
remembering that *He*, who throws out this Re-
proach, never had any better Opportunity, Him-
self, of knowing *Us*, or our *Laws*; Nay, that
He hath very particular Reasons to hate, and
destroy *Them*: That *He* cannot come, with-
out

out being followed by a Line of *Popish Princes*, SERM. *Foreigners*, in every Sense; and that neither *He*, xi. nor *They*, will come, without a *Religion*, Foreign and Superior to all the *Laws* both of God and Man.

4. They may, if they please, be *deluded* by the general Word, of redressing *Grievances*; which yet His *Adherents* themselves mention but very sparingly: because they well know that We have no *Grievances*, in *His* Eye, but the Security of our *Constitution*, in *Church*, and *State*; no *Grievances*, for *Him* to ease Us of, but our *Laws*, *Liberties*, and *Religion*. These He sincerely promises Us, to remove. And I truly believe, that His Religion it self will permit Him faithfully to observe such Promises.

But I have said enough. I have shewn you, what that *Cause* is, and how many Evils are contained in it, which is now opened, and avowed, by the Friends of the *Pretender*. I have considered those *Weak Pretenses*, and *False Insinuations*, by which Many who call Themselves *Protestants*, have been deluded; as they have been managed by the Artifices of *Popery, Guilt, and Resentment*: And, I hope, I have made it appear, that it must be a *Fatal Delusion* indeed, if They do not see, that to join their *Hands* to the Efforts of our *Enemies*,

S E R M. mies, in this *Cause*, is to hasten to the future xi. Ruine of Themselves, and their Posterity, *l~l~* through a Sea of present Calamity ; that to join their *Hearts* and *Wishes*, in it, is to call down every Curse upon Themselves, and all that are to follow them ; and that to put on an *Indifference*, upon this Occasion, is to put it on, in a Cause that doth not admit of an *Indifference*. It is, indeed, to profess an *Indifference* to Life, or Death ; Pleasure, or Pain ; Happiness, or Misery. And tho' *They* may inwardly applaud their own Wisdom, who cautiously wait for the *Event* of things : yet *They* must remember, that their Return to their Senses, from this State of Indifference, will have but an ungraceful Appearance, when All shall be secure ; and that little Thanks will be due to *Them*, (of what sort soever they be,) from their KING or their *Country*, when the Danger shall be over, that *They* have neither opened their Mouths, nor lifted up their Hands, nor so much as their Hearts, against the Enemies, not of *Us* only, but of all *Human Society*.

If it should be told, in any Part of the Earth where the Histories of our Nation have not been before known ; could it possibly be believed, or could it pass for any thing, but an invented *Satyr* upon Human Nature ; that there is a Sort of Men in the World, uneasy at their

own Happiness: either labouring to tear it in s E R M. Pieces, Themselves; or, wishing Success to xi. those who are engaged in that Work; or supinely negligent, cold, and indifferent, what becomes of it: Begging a Deliverer, in the Agony of their Distress; and reviling both the Deliverer, and Deliverance, as soon as it is well accomplished: Shaking off Fetters, in one Generation; and calling for them again, in the next: Tireing out Heaven itself, with Petitions for their own Misery; inviting and imploring every Evil upon Themselves, and their Posterity: making loud Professions of the most submissive Passiveness, under the greatest Worldly Hardships; and unable to bear even so small a one, as *the Want of all Power*: Speaking much, and often, and zealously, of the Security, and flourishing Estate, of their *Church*; and, in the same Breath, giving it up into the Guardianship of *Rome*, whose Disciples openly acknowledge themselves bound, in Conscience, to destroy it: Believing the Promises of *Those*, who Themselves assure them, they are not to be believed; Trusting the Pretenses of *Those*, whose Religion professeth to destroy at once all the Foundations of Trust; and uniting with *Those*, by whom They are sure to be undone, and miserably treated, themselves: *Some*, striving and fighting; *Some*, wishing and desiring;

SER M. and Others, contented, to part with *Ease, Quiet, Laws, Liberty, Property, Religion*, and all the Blessings of Government, administered by Justice and Goodness; And, in their Stead, *Some*, not opposing, and *Others*, contending earnestly, for *Chains, Banishments, Massacres, Slavery*; and for every Evil, contained in the Two Great Comprehensive Engines of Misery, Unchristian *Persecution* in *Church*, and Lawless *Tyranny* in *State*: And, in order to all this, *Some*, taking a Pleasure, and *Others*, satisfied and easy, to see their Native Country laid Waste, and made a Scene of Blood, and Confusion; and the Seat of a *Civil War*, which, in its lowest degree, must unavoidably bring along with it many unhappy Instances of Devastation, and Mourning; which God, the Righteous Judge, will charge to *Their* Account, who neither will know their own Happiness, nor can bear with that of Others: In a word, *Some* openly attempting to destroy, and *Others* not attempting to defend, a *Government*, upon which the Happiness of their own Lives, as well as of their Neighbours and Posterity, entirely depends; and an Administration, which *Themselves* do not charge with any one Instance of *Illegal* or *Arbitrary* Proceeding.

If it be possible to cast a Veil over the Shame of our Country; let not this Scene of Blindness, Absur-

Absurdity, Contradiction, and Inconsistency, ^{S E R M.} make a Part of its History. But if this cannot be hid ; let it be told, at the same time, with how steady a Greatness of Soul, and how calm a Constancy of Mind, the KING received the Insults, and Ungrateful Returns, of Men, whom He came disposed to make happy : Like a Rock, unmoved by those Waves that dash themselves to Pieces against it. Let it be told, with how ready, and sincere, a Zeal, his *Parliament* hastened to vote every thing for *His*, and the *Public Security* ; with how faithful, and vigilant a Care, His *Ministers* detected the secret Contrivances, and opposed the *Open Designs*, of His Enemies : Nor let it be forgot, that, in the midst of all the *Madness of Some*, supported, and increased, by the *Indifference of Others*, there were Multitudes of *Good Subjects*, truly sensible of the Invaluable Blessings They enjoyed in *Him*, and His Administration ; full of Gratitude to Heaven for their Happiness ; and ready to hazard all the Concerns of this World, in the Defense of it.

May the Number of such, daily be seen to increase ! As it must do, if all *Common Sense* be not lost from the Earth : And, may *We*, from the Principles of *Conscience*, and *Honour*, be of that Number ! As *We* must be, if *We* consider what either *Conscience*, or *Honour*, mean.

S E R M. Let us be just to This *Day*, which once was
xi. blessed by every *Protestant* Mouth in this Na-
tion, for the present Relief and Respite from
impending Ruine, which it then brought along
with it: And which ought now much more
to be blessed, as it hath laid the Foundation of
Happiness, not only for Us, but the Children
yet unborn; as We have seen, and now feel,
the Great End aimed at by it, to be crowned
with Success; and the Mercies that it first con-
veyed to Us, (even every thing We enjoy in
Church, and *State*, and the very Possibility of
enjoying it,) secured against every human At-
tempt, but our own *Stupidity*, and *Ingratitude*,
by the Settlement of that *Protestant Success-
ion*, which alone could give Us any Prospect
of Good.

May Almighty God, the Great Governour
of all Things, watch, in a particular Manner,
with the Eye of his Providence, over those *Sac-
red Lives*, upon which All Our Happiness is
suspended! And guard them against every At-
tempt of Secret, or Open, Violence!

May He direct All, to whom the *Admini-
stration* of Affairs is committed, to go on, with
Wisdom, Courage, Unanimity, and Constancy,
to consult, and secure, the Public Interest! And
whether the Influences of it reach to our parti-
cular Concerns, any farther, than as They are
mixed

mixed with the *Public*; Whether We taste of S E R M. its Beneficence, any otherwise, than as Members of the Whole; or not: let us always remember that it is our Duty, not to measure our Obligations to Thankfulness, by any *private* Considerations, distinct from the *Common Good*; but to rejoice, with as much Sincerity and Zeal, for the inestimable Blessing of *Public Security*, in which *All* partake, as God, and Justice, and Reason, require, from a *People*, the most happy in the whole World, if They would but know their own Happiness! Which, God grant They may, before it be hid from their Eyes!

xi.

*The Restoration made a Blessing to Us, by the
Protestant Succession.*

S E R M O N XII.

Preached before the KING, at the Royal Chapel
at St. James's, May 29, 1716, being the
Anniversary of the RESTORATION.

P S A L M cxxvi. 3.

*The Lord hath done great Things for Us; where-
of we are glad.*

S E R M. XII. **I**N all great *Revolutions* of States and King-
doms, which We are called upon to com-
memorate in a Publick Manner, We must
consider what Concern we ourselves have in the
lasting Effects or Consequences of them; and
what ought to be the real Ground of our Joy
upon such Occasions. If we feel no kindly
Influences from them upon our own Affairs;
it will be impossible to warm ourselves into any
Disposition of Mind that can be called *Thank-
fulness*: Which must always be founded upon
Something,

Something, in which We ourselves have a Part. *S E R M.* They will be only like other *Historical Matters* *xii.* *of Fact*; Something to amuse and entertain Us; serving to please our Curiosity, but not to raise our Gratitude. And if We feel the Sentiments of Joy and Thankfulness, rising in our Breasts, from such Principles and Motives, as no true *Christian*, *Protestant*, or *Briton*, ought to entertain: Our Joy then becomes the Same with the Joy of our *Worst Enemies*; and the Expressions of it no better than the Tokens, either of our Blindness, or of our Corruption.

In this Nation particularly, it is certain, that, in all Affairs which concern our *Constitution*, either in *Church* or *State*, nothing can be more absurd, than for the *Friends* of both, and the *Enemies* of both, to have the Same Movements and Passions upon the Same Occasions. It is impossible for a *Protestant*, if He knows what that Word means, to raise his Joy upon the same Foundation with a *Papist*. It is impossible for a Lover of his Religion, and his Country, to rejoice with Those who firmly believe it to be their Duty to rejoice in nothing more, than in the Ruine of both.

As our Joy, therefore, could not possibly discover itself upon *this Day*, if the Providence of God had *done great Things*, not for *Us*, but for our *Forefathers* alone; and had permitted *Them*

248 *The Restoration made a Blessing to Us,*

S E R M. to stop the *Blessing* from descending, or to con-
xii. vey down a *Curse* instead of it: And as *Our*
Joy cannot, in the Nature of Things, be the
Joy of our Enemies; because it must be raised
upon Something of *Our own Happiness*, which
They have hitherto always made inconsistent
with *Theirs*: Let Us now proceed upon this
Foundation, and consider,

The Great Things God bath done for Us, in
that whole *Scene of Providence*, which *this Day*
opened.

This will naturally fix our Minds, in a more
particular Manner upon the *Blessings*, in which
We are immediately concerned.

And this will unavoidably lead Us to some
Thoughts, of Importance to the present and fu-
ture Interest of the Nation.

Now the whole *Scene of Providence*, which
This Day opened, and which, taken in one
View, can alone be said to make *this Day* a
Blessing to Us, is indeed a *Scene* full of a long
Train of Incidents, and a vast Variety of Cir-
cumstances, enough to make both *Prince* and
People, in this Nation, for ever Wise and
Happy.

The first Part of it, is a *King* restored to his
Kingdom; with his *Brother* in view to Succeed
Him;

Him: but this, not till, on one hand, *He had seen*, both by Example, and Experience, how terrible in its Effects, the popular Dread of *Arbitrary Power* could shew itself, when ever it was set on fire; and not till, on the other hand, his *People* had sufficiently felt, how great an Evil the Want of their *Legal Government* was.

One would think here was a plain *Middle Way of Wisdom and Happiness*, pointed out even by *Sense* it self. But there was another, and a very different Turn given to this Affair, by the indefatigable Workings, and Artifices, of our Enemies. An universal Madness of *Loyalty* (falsly so called,) as well as of *Manners*, presently took place: And the *People* came pressing in Throngs, beseeching to be accounted Slaves, rather than Subjects; and begging, in Words, for Opportunities of *unlimited Submission*, as if they were begging for *Acts of Grace* and *Favour*. The View in *Those*, who then had the Direction of their Passions, was to keep that Spirit up to a Pitch, till a *Popish Heir* was secure of the Throne. Nor could all the Knowledge of the Nature and Principles of *Popery*; nor the avowed Contradiction of it to the Religion and Liberties of their Country, engage the Hearts of many; or divert them from the Resolution of trusting the whole Concerns of a

Protestant

250 *The Restoration made a Blessing to Us,*
SERM. *Protestant Nation, in the Hands of a Popish*
xii. *Prince: who at length took Possession of the*
~~~~ *Throne, to which He was thus called.*

Nor had he enjoyed the Power long, before He obliged His Friends with frequent Trials of the Sincerity of their Professions. For, as it appears, He had so much better an Opinion of their Integrity, than his *Predecessor* had, that He really thought them in earnest; and resolved to hazard all, with a Dependence upon the Honesty of their Solemn Promises of *Unbounded Submission*. This, indeed, proved fatal to *Himself* in the Event: But, in all human Appearance, was much more likely to have proved fatal to the whole Nation.

If We stop a little here, and consider this Unhappy *Prince*, possessed of all the Power our *Laws* could vest in Him, and flattered with a Power above all Laws; and armed, in all human Appearance, with a sufficient Force to put his Resolutions in Execution; We may ask any *Protestant* in the *Nation*, if He will but put himself into that Posture of Mind, in which every one felt himself at that Season, What was *then* become of the *Blessing* of this *Day*? And, what would it now have availed Us, that our *Forefathers* saw their *Legal Constitution* restored to them, and rejoiced to see it; if the very *Restoration* of it had proved, in  
the

the Issue, the Ruine and Destruction of all the S E R M.  
*Legal Rights* of their *Posterity*.

xii.

But the Grand Design of Providence extended much farther. There is a *Principal Part* of it yet behind: And this was, to make it a lasting Blessing. And the Way was laid for this, in a Method, if you consider it in itself, the most easy and natural; as *Providence* always loves to work by human Means: if you consider it in that great Variety and Vicissitude of Circumstances attending it, the most instructive and useful to a *Nation*: And if you consider it with regard to the many Probabilities that seemed to weigh against the Success of it, little less than miraculous. When it was fixed by *Providence* to bring about the *Restoration* of the *Royal Family*, and the *Legal Constitution* of this *Kingdom*; and to continue it a *Blessing* to the Generations to come; it was necessary, in order to this, to make such a Disposition of Affairs, as might be suitable, and adapted, to the Accomplishment of it. But first, the *Nation* was to feel many and various Trials; many Vicissitudes of Hope, and Fear; many Conflicts between the Attempts of *Popery*, and *Slavery*, on the one hand, and the Strugglings of *true Religion* and *Liberty*, on the other; before so great a Work could be concluded. And then, at length, the Embarrassments of Human

S E R M. man Madness were to be disentangled, and all  
xii. the Plots and Efforts of Cunning and Power,  
united, in order to intail a Curse upon all Poste-  
rity, where God designed a Blessing, were to  
be dissipated, and scattered into Air.

With a View to this, a *Prince* was born  
Some Years before the *Restoration*, that He  
might be ripe, both in Age, and Abilities, for  
the performing the great Design, just when  
those Attempts should be ripening into Execu-  
tion: And was afterwards, by a kind Disposi-  
tion of Providence, to make the Way the easier,  
married into the Same *Royal Family*, from  
which He descended. And accordingly, when  
the Scene of Ruine was opened so plainly, that  
no Eye was *then* too blind to see it, He appear-  
ed in all the Maturity of Wisdom, and Vigor of  
Action: A Prince, inured to Labours and Hard-  
ships from his Birth; prepared for the great  
Work, by his personal Accomplishments; di-  
rected to it, by his Descent, and his Marriage;  
and qualified for it by his Interest and Authori-  
ty *Without*, as well as by an Uncommon Great-  
ness of Soul *Within*. Such a peculiar Conjunc-  
tion of every thing desirable in the Person to  
Undertake a Work, hazardous enough, one  
would imagine, to deter the Greatest Minds  
from thinking of it; and Such a Disposition of  
the various Interests of the *States* and *Kingdoms*  
of

of Europe, as both required and supported the S E R M. Undertaking ; must appear very surprizing, in xii. so critical a Moment of Time : When, if we ~~we~~ speak within the compass of Human Views, nothing but so unparalleled a *Combination of Circumstances* could have afforded even the least hopes of Success.

The *Event* of this was happy beyond Expression : And the *Madness of Popery* and *Arbitrary Rule*, was stopped in the Vigour and Warmth of all its Power, and Hopes. But even yet, Something farther was wanting ; and *That* was, to fix the *Succession to the Crown*, in such a Manner, as the *Experience of Feeling*, and *Common Sense* in *Judging*, of necessity directed the Nation to do. This *Day* must have been marked with something very different from a *Blessing*, if the *Revolution* had stopped where it began ; and, after a little present Respite, had delivered the Nation back again, into *Popish* Hands. And where indeed should We now search for the *Blessing* of the *Restoration* ; if We did not see it, and feel it, in the *Blessing* of the *Protestant Succession* ?

This was the Great View of Heaven, in its first Design. And, therefore, We see with Pleasure, that when it was resolved by Providence to make *this Day* memorable, by the *Restoration* of the *Royal Family*, and our *Legal Constitution*,

S E R M. t i o n, it was resolved by the same good Provi-  
xii. dence, that, in the very same Year, upon the  
very Day before this Great Work was to be ac-  
complished, a Prince should be born, in Whom  
that *Restoration*, should in due Time centre, and  
to whom alone it should be reserved to compleat  
the *Blessing* for *Us*, and to transmit it down se-  
cure, to our Posterity, in his own *Illustrious*  
*House.*

This, I say, is the *whole Scene of Providence* which *this Day* opened ; and which, taken in one View, can alone be said to make it a *Blessing to Us*, or to our Children after Us. If you view the *Restoration*, without the *Revolution*, and the *Protestant Succession* ; it leads you directly to a *Popish Prince*, holding an Arbitrary Hand over all your Liberties : tearing up the Fences of all your Laws ; fixing all *Right* in his own Will and Power ; and persecuting all his Subjects into the Exercise of his own, Superstitious, Idolatrous, and Cruel Religion. And this is the whole of the *Blessing*, in which you would see it end at last. A Blessing, which may be a fit Reward for the *Slavish Bigotry* of *Papists* ! But for *Protestants* — fit only for *Those* of them who deserve it. And *They* deserve it, who chuse it ; whom no Experience, no Consideration, no Miracles of Providence,

can engage to prefer their own Happiness before S E R M.  
their own Destruction.

XII.

But if We view the same *Restoration*, in another Light, as the *Restoration* of our *Legal Constitution*, secured by the late *Revolution*, and fixed by the *Settlement* of the Crown in the *Protestant Line*; it appears a Blessing to *Us* indeed, by leading *Us* to the *Happiness* which *We* ourselves at present see, and feel; but cannot describe.

We have now, therefore, by an easy and natural Train of *Facts*, brought down our Thoughts to the present Times, in which our Eyes behold the *Grand Design* of this *Day*, brought to Maturity; and Plenty of Happiness held forth to *Us*, if *We* have any Sense or Notion left of what Happiness means, by the *Protestant Succession* now taking place. A Blessing recommended to *Us*, by the immense Difficulties cast in its Way, before it could be settled by a *Law*; and the various Hazards of losing it, since it was so! And a *Blessing*, which, unlike the other Blessings of this World, fully answers, in the Enjoyment, all the Expectations which it raised in the *Prospect*.

If it be the greatest Happiness that can be tasted in Human Society, to be governed by *Laws*; *We* *feel* our selves, and all our Concerns, under the Influence of a *Legal Government*.

SE R M. ment. If it be certain, that Those Princes are  
xii. best qualified to govern well by *Written Laws*,  
~~~~~ who have governed well without them ; this is  
a peculiar Part of our Happiness, to have the
Execution of our Laws, and the Preservation
of our Rights, vested in a *Prince*, who never
betrayed, even when his Will was his *Law*, the
least Inclination towards any Designs, but what
are the Dictates of the strictest Justice. And if
it redoubles a Blessing, to foresee it flourishing
amongst our *Posterity* in future Ages ; let this
be acknowledged a great Addition to our present
Happiness, that We may promise it to our Chil-
dren after Us, under the Influences of Those
who are to succeed Him.

This is such a *System*, such a *Collection* of
Blessings, as ought, in Justice, to be viewed
with the most passionate Sentiments of Joy and
Thanksgiving. A *King* upon the Throne,
formed for the Happiness of All, who live un-
der the Shadow of his Authority : By his ex-
perienced Virtues, entitled to the *Love* and *Af-
fection* of his *Subjects* ; and by the *Laws* of their
Country, (built upon the Fundamental Laws of
Human Society) entitled to their Allegiance :
Great in *Himself*, if the Perfection of Justice,
and Honour, and Equity, be true Greatness ;
and Great in his *Illustrious Family*, if the Pro-
spect of transmitting Blessings to *Posterity*, by
a Line

a Line of Princes descending from Himself, ~~S E R M.~~ makes up any Part of Greatness: And, in a peculiar Manner, Great in his Influences upon the ~~xii.~~ present State of this Nation, as He stands possessed of an unshaken Steadiness of Soul, not to be moved from his People's Interest; and of a Firmness of Mind, uncapable of the Impressions, either of Fear, or of Inconstancy. Without which Noble and Happy Accomplishments in the *First Possessor* in that *Illustrious House*, which the Providence of God hath now fixed upon the Throne, it may justly be feared, that this Happy Settlement might by this Time have been Shaken, and the Blessings of the *Protestant Religion*, and our *Legal Liberty* (for which We have been so many Years contending,) might once more have been in danger of vanishing from our Sight.

And even still, the Suspicion of So much Happiness Ceasing in Time to come, might be very uneasy to Us, if We did not see, in his *Royal Heir*, and *Successor*, a Noble and Generous Zeal, avowed with all the Tokens of the most Sincere and Upright Heart, for the same invaluable Goods.

Nor will I ever omit, when I am recounting the Instances of our Publick Happiness, to mention that *Race of Princes* to come: From *Whom*, what is it that We may not expect?

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SER M. When We not only think of the Examples of
xii. Good Government they will have Seen ; but
~~ consider them now under the Eye and Direction of a *Princess*, in whom the Perfection of Good Sense, and the Perfection of Good Nature, are united ; and out done by nothing, unless by that Sacred Regard to *True Religion*, which will make her Story the Delight of Good Men in Ages to come.

This is the Fabrick of Happiness in which our Souls may take their Rest. How much less than this, might We our Selves have been well contented to hope for : And indeed, What more than this, could any Nation under Heaven well wish for ? And yet, Against this whole *Scheme of Blessings* ; against their own, and their Neighbours Security ; against their own *Laws* and *Liberties* ; against the Establishment of every thing valuable in this World ; We have seen a *Rebellion* raised, by the Wicked Perverseness of Men, without the Pretense of a Provocation, besides the single Provocation of offering them Happiness, in a Way, and by the Hands, which They were not pleased to like : And this, before their Passions had any thing offered to them, to set them on Fire. And We have Seen an *Administration* reviled, and insulted, by Those, who themselves had tasted nothing but Good from it.

When

When one reflects with Coolness upon what S E R M. hath lately past amongst Us, it seems as if the Fullness of Happiness had it self set on fire the restleſ Malice of Those, who were resolved not to acknowledge or enjoy the Blessing offered them; and that the Rage of Enmity hath been forced to be raised the higher, and the louder, by all the Management of Artifice, because there was so little to Complain of.

But this is the Glory of an *Administration*; when Those who most revile it, cannot do it without bearing Testimony to it themselves. It is the Glory of an *Administration*, when the Reproaches, with which it is to be loaded, are cast into *Future Times*; when the bitterest Enemies it hath, are forced to call in the Help of the most fruitful Invention; and, for want of present Grievances, to fill the Minds of Men with the Suspicions of Evils to come. It is the Glory of an *Administration*, when, before it can be blackened, and made vile, the Names, and Natures, and Boundaries of Things, must be altered and removed: *Light* put for *Darkness*, and *Darkness* for *Light*; *Legal Justice*, (though mixed with more Temper, than ever yet was seen, in any Nation, upon a like Occasion,) treated with the Indignity, due only to the *Heights of Injustice*; the most necessary *Self-defence* reviled as *Cruelty*; and a *False Compassion* placed

S E R M. in the Seat of *Mercy* ; the Safety of a *whole Nation*, and all its Concerns, weighed in the Balance against *Trifles* ; and even *Popery* itself painted with *Truth*, and *Meekness*, and *Love*, in its Face, as an harmless agreeable Thing, worthy to be received with the open Arms of Friendship, by Those, it would devour.

When these are the Methods of attacking an *Administration*, it is a very happy Sign, that They, who make use of them, have occasion heartily to wish it much worse than They find it ; and a very strong Argument to all Good Subjects, to wish as heartily that their Country may never know the want of an *Administration*, which is not reviled by its *Greatest Enemies*, unless it be in such a Manner, as to add to its Reputation and Honour.

What is it, that an Uneasy, Thankless, Generation of Men would have ? Blessed be God, the Publick Efforts of their Malice are once more dissipated. They are conquered in the Field. But their *Spirits*, and their *Tempers*, and their *Designs*, do not at all appear to be conquered : If We may judge from their Indefatigable Diligence and Art, in filling the Heads of their Well-wishers, as Soon as *one* Desperate Attempt is over, with Hints and Expectations of *Another* ; and from the Unparalleled Insolence of their Agents and Followers,

even

even whilst they are begging and waiting for S E R M. Mercy.

XII.

It may be very hard, to find present and effectual Remedies for so great Evils. But this *One* thing, I am sure, is very plain, and very proper to be mentioned, that, in order entirely and successfully to conquer such *Enemies*, We must first conquer *Ourselves*. — Did all, who truly wish well to the present Establishment, unanimously pursue the Same *good Ends*, there would be no ground for Fear. But whilst the Passions of Well-meaning Men, upon every Trifling and Private Occasion, join themselves with the *Designs* of Those, who certainly mean our Ruine; it is *this* that swells the Current; and that feeds the Insolence and Expectation of the Common Enemy.

But to conclude: If a long Series of Experience can make any Nation wise, *We*, of all Nations in the World, have that Advantage. We are not only made happy; but made happy in those Methods, which cannot but teach Us to value our Happiness; whilst, That which *Others* learn by Reilexion and Judgment, *We* have had brought home to Us, by the Sense of *Feeling*, and *Eye-Sight*. The Enemies of our Happiness themselves, ought to learn Conviction, from All that this Nation hath been Witness to; and to become Friends. And for

SERM. Those, who are truly Friends, in the main
xii. and essential Points of our Happiness ; certainly
it is Time for all of them to think it Wisdom, to give up even their private Schemes
and Notions, as well as their private Resent-
ments and Views, to the Publick Good ; and,
at length, after so many Vicissitudes of Hope
and Fear, so many Struggles between Life and
Death, so many Hazards and Dangers escaped,
to unite in strengthening, instead of weakening,
the Hands of *Those*, who have it in their Will,
as well as in their Trust, to establish Us upon
a Foundation never more to be shaken : That
so, the *Best of Kings* may have the *Best of Sub-
jects* ; and, Authority and Law, Obedience and
Liberty, may be seen united, in all their Vi-
gour and Glory ; and descend down, with the
Blessings which accompany them, to all Future
Generations. *Which God grant, for the Sake
of Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord !*

The Nature and Duty of a Public Spirit.

SERMON XIII.

Preached at St. James's, *Westminster*, on St. David's Day, March 1, 1716. before the Honourable the Stewards and Others of the Society of *Antient Britons*, established in Honour of Her Royal Highness's Birth-day, and the *Principality of Wales*.

PHIL. ii. 4.

Look not every Man on his own Things: But every Man also on the Things of Others.

TH E R E are hardly any Words, more ^{S E R M.} common in the Mouths of Men, than ^{XIII.} a *Public Spirit*; a *Regard to the Public*; the *Good of the Public*; the *Love of our Country*; and many others of the like Sort: Which are indeed, in their Original Design, but different Expressions for One and the Same Thing. The Great Point is, what these

S E R M. Words ought truly to signify ; what Temper
xiii. and Disposition of Mind ; what Practice and
Conduct of Life, They ought to represent and
design. And, as I think that the great End
of such *Societies* and *Assemblies*, as the pre-
sent, is to cultivate that Good Spirit of Love
and Humanity, which may diffuse itself thro'
the whole Tenor of Men's Actions ; I have,
upon this Account, thought it proper to chuse
these Words of St. *Paul* : In which He con-
demns that *Vicious Selfishness* which teacheth
Us to confine our Views to *Ourselves* alone,
considered as separated from the Rest of the
World ; and, at the same Time, directs Us to
the contrary good Temper and Disposition, of
a Diffusive Regard to All Mankind around
Us. And I chuse Them, as They will give
Us Occasion to consider, in a more general
Way, than perhaps *He* at that Time directly
intended, and with a particular View to *Hu-
man Society*, The true *Foundation*, *Nature*,
and *Extent*, of a *Public Spirit* ; the *Bad Dis-
position*, and *Vice*, opposite to it ; the *Effects*
in which *It* will shew itself ; and the *Motives*
there are, to the cherishing and improving it
in *Ourselves*.

1. The *Foundation* of it is laid in that *Virtuous Love* of *Ourselves*, which is joined with
the *Love of Others*, united with Us in *Human
Society* :

Society: And it must be supported by that S E R M. great and god-like Disposition of Mind, which XIII. desires and labours to plant Happiness, where ~~it is not~~ it is not; and to continue it where it is. And this is the same Thing with that Comprehensive *Love* and *Charity* towards *Others*, which the *Gospel* came to restore, and to inflame. But this, I say, not so, as to exclude that Reasonable Regard to ourselves, and our own Concerns, which never is, nor can be, a *Vice*. So far from it, that, as long as We are Members of *Human Society*, nothing can more secure and improve our own Happiness, than this Regard to the Happiness of that *Human Society*, of which we are Members. We can do nothing for that good End, but what will reflect back its happy Influences upon ourselves, in some Degree or other: As Every *Law* for the Preservation, and Glory, and Happiness, of the *Public*, is a *Law*, in which All the Members of the *Public* must find their own Account, and their own Security. So that a *Public Spirit* is not founded upon a *Regard to Others*, inconsistent with a *Regard to Ourselves*, in a good Sense; but really takes in that virtuous and praise-worthy *Self-love*; which considers our own True Lasting Interest, (as well as the Peace, and Applauses of our Mind within,) closely united with

SERM. with the Happiness and Interest of All around
XIII. Us.

~~~ This may appear with more Light, if you consider the very Method, and End, of Mankind's *Engagements* with one another, in their entering into the *Terms* of *Human Society*. Before you suppose this *Engagement*, or Compact, or whatever you will call it, Every Man was, properly speaking, *One by Himself*; guarding *Himself* alone, against *Others*; taking every thing for his Support, which could come within his Reach; and having *Himself* alone, under his own Care and Protection. The first Step towards *Human Society* must arise, in the Nature of the thing, from a Desire of a more settled Security, than Every Man, by *Himself*, could find in his own Defense and Protection; joined with a Benevolent Desire of the same Good to *Others*, which Every One found the want of, in *Himself*. And the Nature of the *Stipulation*, or *Agreement*, must have been this; not, to profess or pretend to throw off All Concern for *Themselves*; or to regard the Happiness of *Others*, in a way inconsistent with their own: But to engage for that mutual Strength and Support, which should be the Happiness of All the Members of Society; that is, of *Themselves*, as well as of *Others*.

The *Public Spirit*, therefore, We are now S E R M. speaking of, as it respects *Human Society*, xiii. must be founded upon the Original Design, ~~and~~ and End, of *Human Society*; which was, in the Intent of every Man, the Good and Happiness of *Himself*, considered in Conjunction with the Good and Happiness of *Others*.

2. This will lead Us to the True Account of the opposite *Vice*. For it is plain from what hath been said, that this doth not consist in regarding *Ourselves*; provided we regard *Ourselves* as Members of *Society*, united in the Bonds of Friendship and Union with many *Others*, for the same End of Mutual Preservation and Happiness; But that the *Crime* consists in regarding *Ourselves* in such a manner, as doth in effect take Us again out of that *Society*, into which We were entered; and shews that we consider *Ourselves*, as retired back again into that *State*, in which We were originally Our own Supports, and Our own Defenders, without Regard to Any but Our selves. This, Every one sees plainly, in the Case of Notorious Offenders; in Instances which public Infamy and constant Punishment have marked with Disgrace; such as Open Robbery, and Violence, and Rapine. But it is as true, and as certain, in all other, less observed, and less notorious, Instances. For, as Men professing those Vices, have,

S E R M. have, for their own present Humour, or Paf-  
xiii. sion, voluntarily removed Themselves out of  
that *Society*, in which They were once engaged: So, Whoever, out of a false regard to Themselves; either for a present Gratification of Covetousnes, Pride, Ambition, Revenge, or the like, hinder the least Good, or procure the least Evil, to the *Public*; *These Men* are, in that Instance, and in that Degree, upon the same foot with the *Others*. They are so far got loose from the Bonds of Human Society. They so far regard Themselves as Particulars, standing by Themselves. They have so far torn themselves from the Ties and Concerns of Social Engagements. And, tho' they may avoid the Infamy of *Common Discourse*, which generally follows nothing but *Public* and *Shameful Punishment*; yet, in reality They are but just where the *Others* are; that is, They are again got back into a *State* directly opposite to that of *Human Society*; and are divested of All Real Title to the *Advantages* of a Condition, from which They have voluntarily separated Themselves.

The *Question* therefore, to any Man upon this Subject, is only this, Whether, upon any Occasion, He will regard *Himself*, and his own immediate Passions and Views, (which He supposeth His present Good,) in Distinction and Opposition to the Good of *Society*;

ciety; or, Whether He will be content to re- s E R M. gard *Himself*, as a Member of *Society*; and xiii. his own particular Good and Happiness, as ~~united~~ united and consistent with the *Good* and *Happi-*  
*ness* of Others. In the former Case, His Choice immediately dissolves the Relation between *Him* and *Others*, and gives Them a Right to look upon, and treat Him, as a *Pub-*  
*lic Enemy*. In the latter Case, His Choice is directed by a Benevolent Temper to *Himself*, as well as to *Others*; and by a Desire of the Happiness of *Others*, as united with his own, in the same Great Concerns.

3. It follows naturally, upon what hath been said, to observe, that it is this Desire of the Happiness of *Others*, this Generous and Diffusive Love of Mankind, which, in all Seasons, and upon all Occasions, will be our chief Defense against falling into the *Vice*, I have been now speaking of. For tho', at the Beginning, the first Thought of entering into the *Terms* of *Society*, was owing to the Wants, and Defects, which Every particular Man found in *Himself*, for his own particular Support and Preservation; yet the *End* of that *Society* must be answered, and maintained, by that Equitable Rule, of not expecting from *Others*, what We ourselves are not ready to afford Them, in all like Circumstances.

And,

S E R M. And, in order to afford Them, what We  
XIII. think reasonable to expect from Them, We  
must feel, and improve, in our selves, the  
Love and Desire of the Happiness of the  
World about Us ; and fix it as a steady Princi-  
ple of our own Conduct, that it is not only  
strictly agreeable to the very *Engagements* of  
*Human Society*, in which We are entered ;  
but that it is highly glorious, and honourable,  
to add to the Happiness, and to diminish the  
Miseries, of Others, as far as our Power and  
Influence can extend Themselves.

The Great Necessity, and Usefulness, of  
having such a Support, laid deep in a Well-  
disposed Mind, will appear to Any, who will  
give Themselves the Trouble of remarking the  
many Powerful, and too often Successful, Ene-  
mies there are, to this Good and Benevolent  
Spirit. Sometimes Covetousness, and some-  
times Pride ; sometimes the Ambition and  
Thirst of Power, and sometimes the Revenge  
and Rage of Disappointment, will overturn the  
Minds of Men, on a sudden ; and make them  
forget, that They are entered into Society  
with their Neighbours : Unless They have  
firmly fixed it in their own Judgments, that  
it can never be *dishonourable* for them to pro-  
mote the *Happiness* of Others ; nor ever be  
*honourable* for Them, in any Degree, to take

*Themselves* back again to *Themselves*, after ~~S E R M.~~ xiii.   
They have once entered into All the *Engagements* of *Human Society*. And this can never be firmly fixed in any Mind, in which that *Vicious Selfishness* reigns, which banishes All Disposition towards making others happy; and plants in its room a cold Neglect of All the Rest of Mankind. Many a One, who would start at the Thought of being an open *Robber*, or *Cut-throat*, yet is sometimes found to indulge Himself, out of some poor private View, or Resentment, in acting a Part, which puts Him as much out of *Society*; and is, in it's Effects, perhaps of more fatal Consequence to the Happiness of Mankind, than Thousands of Robberies, and Private Violences. The same *Law of Equity*, Condemns the *One*, which Condemns the *Other*. The same Reasons engage Us against the *One*, which engage Us against the *Other*. The same End of *Society*, and the same Desire of the *Happiness of Others*, rightly considered, and thoroughly imbibed, would effectually prevent or cure them both. And in Cases, where no public Temporal Punishment follows, nothing but a *Good Principle* within, can be of any lasting good Consequence.

4. As for the *Effects*, that will be seen to flow from hence; a *Public Spirit*, or the *Love of Our Country*, or whatever it may be called,

S E R M. called, will not shew itself, as if it were the  
xiii. Love of a particular *Climate*, or *Soil*; or of a  
particular *Constitution of Government*, what-  
ever it be, merely because we happen to be  
born under it: But it will appear in All the  
Genuine Effects of a sincere Desire of the  
Happiness of *Society*, and of *Ourselves*, con-  
sidered as Members of *Society*. It will answer  
those *Ends* and *Engagements* of *Human Society*,  
upon which it is built; and produce All the  
*Fruits* of that Love of Mankind, which We  
can never forbear to extol and applaud where-  
ever We meet with it. It will Act with a  
View to Our own Happiness, considered as  
tempered in such a manner with that of  
Others, as that We can never destroy our  
own Lasting Interest, whilst We promote the  
Common Interest, in which Our own lives  
and breathes. It is Something as far removed  
from Noise and Passion in *Words*; as it is from  
Pride, Ambition, Covetousness, or Revenge,  
in *Actions*. It doth not always, indeed, sooth  
and flatter our present Passion, or Every Im-  
mediate View of Personal Profit, or Power;  
but it always tends to secure, even our Private  
Good, which We have, by entering into So-  
ciety, mixt with the Good of Others. In a  
word, It is seen in a Constant Regard to the  
Interest of that *Society*, from which *Our own*

cannot be separated : And consists, not in a ~~S E R M.~~  
Neglect of *Ourselves* ; but in a Regard to *Others*, XIII.  
closely united, in the same Common Happiness,  
or Common Misery, with *Ourselves*.

5. I come now to the *Motives* and *Inducements* to this Disposition, and Practice. And, as I have hitherto considered a *Public Spirit*, with regard to *Human Society* ; so, the *first* Motive naturally ariseth from hence, that the *Ends* and *Engagements* of *Human Society* make *This* the Duty of every Man, who is not willing to appear false to his *Honour*, and to his *Affurances*. There is no need of any Explicit Formal *Contract* in this Case. For, who-ever thinks, He hath Reason to expect the *Privileges*, the *Protection*, the *Support*, arising from *Society*, (which, I believe, Few will think they have forfeited,) doth, by that very Thought, effectually give, or renew, the *necessary Affurances*, on his own Part. He acknowledges Himself bound by all the Ties of that *Society* ; and consequently obliged, in *Honour* and *Conscience*, to regard *Himself*, not as a Person by *Himself*, with his own private Passions and Humours only to gratify, but as *One* of a Number of Men, whose Happiness and Interest is one and the same. Whenever, therefore, He separates his own *Good*, from that of the *Whole*, into which he

T professeth

SE R M. professeth voluntarily to throw it, every Hour  
 XIII. that He lives under the Benefit and Protection  
 of *Social Laws*; He sins against Those useful  
*Obligations*; with much more Dishonour, and many more fatal Consequences, than a Man who breaks his private *Agreement*, or revokes his *Verbal Promise*, or his *written Bond*. It is invain, indeed, that Men are entered into the *Ties* of *Society*, unless They look upon that very Entrance into them, as a strict Obligation upon them, to Act agreeably to those *Ties*.

So that, if You only consider yourselves as *Members* of *Human Society*, You have the strongest Motive, which Honour, and Reason, and Equity, can suggest; that is, the *Motive* taken from the Bonds, and Engagements, You have brought yourselves under; to perform, on your Part, what in Reason you may expect from *Others* in the same Circumstances; and what is agreeable and answerable to the Privileges and Protection You think yourselves entitled to, from the *Body Politic*. To claim the Benefits of *Laws*, and the Supports arising from *Human Society*, is absolutely unreasonable and absurd, for any One to presume to do, who hath any Sense of Virtue and Honour left; unless He be ready, on his own Part, to pay back again all the Reciprocal

cal Duties respecting the Good of the Whole: s E R M. Which He doth, in Effect, Promise and xiii. Vow to do, whenever He expects those Benefits. The first Motive therefore is this. You are entered into the Engagements of *Human Society*. You are obliged in Conscience and Honour to answer those Engagements. And consequently, are obliged to regard the Happiness of that *Society*, in which your own is concerned; and your own private Inclinations or Passions, no farther, than as they are consistent, not only with the Security, but with the Happiness, of the *Public*.

If from hence we proceed to consider Ourselves as *Reasonable Creatures*, brought into Being by the Great Father of all Things; and capable of finding out his Existence, Nature, and Perfections; We shall be persuaded, that We can never be so Great in Ourselves, as when We conform Ourselves to his Will, or imitate his Perfections. And, when we know that He loves to communicate Happiness; and that His great Glory is, Mercy, and Goodness, diffused to all Beings, who do not make Themselves uncapable of them: This will be a powerful *Motive* to all *who know his Name*, to esteem it as their own great Glory and Honour, to resemble Him, in that Good and Benevolent Disposition, to

S E R M. which They themselves owe All that they enjoy, and all that They can hope for.

If we now consider Ourselves as *Christians*, We shall find that the *Best Religion* is founded in *Love*; and that this *Love* is not a *Passion*, or a *Fancy*, or an *Enthusiasm*, of the Mind, but the *Beneficence* of Practice; that it consists, not in *Profession*, and *Words*, but in *Deed*, and *Action*; that it hath no other Signification, in the Law of *Christians*, but *doing Good*, that is, adding to the Happiness, or diminishing the Miseries, of *Others*. This is that *true Friendship*, with regard to particular Persons, which alone deserves that Name; and this is that *true Public Spirit*, with regard to the *whole Society* to which We belong, which comprehends and enlivens every Duty we owe to it. If we have *Christian Charity*, We have that *Beneficent Temper* which promotes the *Good* of *Others*; and the more Diffusive and Extensive this is, the more *Christian* it is: And if We feel nothing of the Desire of the Happiness of *Others*, in Us, We are certainly void of All that *Love*, which is the Foundation, and Essence, of the *Gospel*.

The *last* thing I shall mention, is, *Self-Love*, and *Self-Interest*, rightly understood. For I am persuaded that, if *this* be wholly left out of the *Question*; and All regard to *Themselves* be excluded,

excluded, so that Men shall find that they S E R M. are neither to reap *Profit*, nor *Pleasure*, XIII. nor *Honour*, nor any *Advantage*, from the Part they are to act, it is invain to enter into Argument with Them. Their Practice must be determined another way; and the *Passions* of their Hearts will easily hurry Them, whithersoever They please. And here, if Men have any native Goodnes and Probity of Mind, They will feel within Themselves the *Pleasure* and *Honour* of keeping strictly to those *Engagements*, which the Nature of *Human Society* layeth upon them; and for which alone They receive the Supports and Protection of it. They will have the Reward within, of a peaceful Breast, undisturbed with the Tumults of Paffion, Pride, Covetousness, or Revenge. They will feel that it is, truly speaking, much more happy to *Themselves*, to give Bounds to their own Desires and Views, in Conjunction with the *Ends of Society*; than to break through their own Obligations, to ruffle and discompose their own Breasts, merely for the sake of laying hold on every Opportunity of adding, for the present Moment, either to their *Riches*, or their *Power*.

The Difference is this, that They will not indeed have the Satisfaction of gratifying every present *Humour*, or *Inclination*, or *Rage*;

S E R M. (if that can be called a *Satisfaction*, which often brings so much Private, as well as Public, Evil along with it:) but They will have the Satisfaction, even as to *Themselves*, of pursuing their present Interest in a more steady and secure, as well as a more honourable, way; and at the same Time of continuing down those Goods to their own *Posterity*, which They enjoy themselves. Whereas every Breach, or Violence, made upon the *Scheme of Public Good*, hath appeared, in Multitudes of Instances, to have ended even in the Temporal Disadvantage, or Ruine, of the Persons Themselves who have been tempted to join in it. So it may *probably* be always, because in its Nature it tends to it: But it will *certainly* affect many hereafter, in whom They ought to think Themselves nearly and deeply concerned.

If, therefore, Men have any Regard to inward Peace and Tranquillity; if They have any Sense of Contentment within, or Security without; if They will consult their Understanding, and not their *Passion*, about their *Interest*; if They are not lost to all Sense of the Good of their own *Posterity*; if They have not thrown off all Regard to their *Reason*, as well as all *Belief* in *God*; They will think even their present Interest, (as well as their

their Future Reward,) sufficiently consulted S E R M. and secured, by such a Temper of Mind, as XIII. will teach Them to disdain to accept of the *Benefits of Society*, without adding to the Happiness of it; and to pursue their own present Good, always in Conjunction with *that* of the *Public*, to which They belong.

I must not make an End, without saying something upon the present Occasion of our meeting together. This *Society* hath many *Circumstances* of Advantage above Others of the like Nature, not only as it comprehends, in its Intent, a very great Number of the most Antient and Noble *Families* of this *Island*; but as it flourishes under a most *Illustrious* and *Royal President*; as it was first instituted to the Honour of a *Princess*, whose Name carries every happy Influence along with it; as it is expressly founded upon a Principle of Affection, as well as Duty, to that *Royal Family*, in which We are now so happy above all the Nations around us; and as it is peculiarly designed to diffuse and propagate that *Public Spirit*, or Love to our *Country*, which is inseparably the same with *Their Interest*. If You consider Yourselves in this View, You will from hence receive new Supplies of *Zeal*, and fresh *Motives* to every Thing, You owe to *Yourselves*, *Your Fellow-Subjects*, and *Your Posterity*.

S E R M. When *this Day* leads your Thoughts from  
 XIII. a *Dead Saint*, whose Virtues You ought to cele-  
 brate, as far as the *History* of so remote and  
 dark an *Age* will permit, to that *Living Exam-  
 ple* of Virtue, whose Birth gives it its present  
 Lustre and Brightness ; to a *Saint*, not dressed  
 up in the Pageantry of a blind Superstition ;  
 but adorned with those real and substantial  
 Graces, the Practice of which You can see  
 with Admiration, and the Effect of which  
 the World feels with Happiness : When *this Day*  
 directs your Thoughts in this Manner,  
 the Honour You pay to *Her* is paid to *Virtue* :  
 And the Pleasure you perceive, in paying it,  
 ariseth from a Regard to the *Public* ; when  
 You are carried by the same Thought to view  
*Posterity*, made happy, perhaps in many  
 Countries, by *Those*, whose Minds and Man-  
 ners She is now forming to every Thing  
 Great, and Beneficent ; as well as to remark  
 the Influences of Wisdom and Goodness upon  
 the present Generation.

When You consider *Yourselves*, as under  
 the *Presidency* of His ROYAL HIGHNESS, *His*  
 Zeal for the Good of *Great Britain*, will  
 animate and inflame your own. In the  
 Calm of Prosperity, He will always praise  
 and extol your Love of Your Laws and of  
 your Country. In the Times of Hazard  
 and

and Distress, if any such should come, *He* S E R M. will lead You on to Glory by his Example. xiii. And if You follow Him through the Paths of W W Honour and Courage, You will make *Your selves*, and your *Posterity*, as happy, as He wishes You to be; and that is, as happy as You can wish yourselves to be.

Your Thoughts will now naturally lead you to that truly Great and Good KING, whom the particular Providence of *God* hath placed, and preserved, upon the Throne of these *Kingdoms*. If You consider *Him* in His Disposition, His Temper, His Resolutions; how much Encouragement will You find in all these, to your improving and inflaming a true *Public Spiritedness* in Yourselves? And how much need of it will you discover, if you reflect upon that *Scene* of Behaviour towards *Him*, to which our own Eyes have been, and are, Witnesses? *He* came to Us, clothed with all the Circumstances that could recommend *Him*, even to our Passionate Love. *Power* and *Authority* *He* had enjoyed, in its Supreme Height, long before, in his own Country. But *He* always chose to Reign, not by His *Power*, but by His *Goodness*: And They who lived under his Influences, *loved* *Him* too well, to be sensible They *obeyed* *Him*. *His* Beneficence made every Part of their

S E R M. their Behaviour, result from *Affection*, rather  
XIII. than *Duty*. And yet, tho' this was His  
known and experienced Conduct ; and tho'  
He came hither disposed to cherish *Our Happiness*, as *His own* ; and to establish this Nation :  
We have seen Those amongst Ourselves, who  
have been ready to prefer the *Certain Enemies*  
of their *Religion* and *Liberties*, before the  
*Greatest Friend*, Those invaluable Goods ever  
yet could boast of. They have been willing  
to call in the Bigotry and Revenge of *Popery* :  
And, when that alone hath failed, even to invite in a Deluge of relentless Destruction, and  
Desolation, in order to get rid of a State of  
Happiness, which they are conscious They do  
not deserve, and have shewn themselves not  
able to bear.

But let not the *Zeal* of some, to tear in  
Pieces that *Scheme* of *Blessings* which Heaven  
hath put into our Hands, exceed our *Zeal* to  
stop its Passage from Us, and to secure it to  
Ourselves and all Posterity. As We have a  
*Prince* upon the *Throne*, who, unlike most of  
the *Princes* of this *World*, desires nothing of  
Us, but to make ourselves happy ; as We  
have all the Inducements that *Men*, and  
*Christians*, and *Protestants*, can have ; as We  
have all the Terrors, and Evils, that the  
strongest

strongest Imagination can invent, to fear for ~~S E R M.~~  
our Country, if the Cause of Religion and ~~XIII.~~  
Liberty should be overturned and oppressed ;  
as We are ourselves, in our own Persons,  
deeply concerned in all the miserable Conse-  
quences of such an Event; and are under all  
the Obligations of Honour, and Conscience, to  
promote the Happiness of the *Public*, of  
which We are Members; and as We must  
expect to answer to God, as well as to our  
own Consciences, for our Stupidity and Mad-  
ness, in neglecting so great and invaluable  
Good Things: Let Us not permit the Zeal of  
a true *Public Spirit* to cool in our Breasts;  
let Us not only improve it in Ourselves, but  
let us kindle and increase it in *Others*; till it  
may come to be too powerful for that *Nar-  
row, Vicious, Selfishness*, which is the Root of  
all *Public Evil*; and settle Us at last upon the  
unmoveable Foundation of *Peace* and *Happi-  
ness*.

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*The Nature of the Kingdom, or Church, of  
C H R I S T.*

## S E R M O N X I V.

Preached before the KING, at the Royal Chapel  
at St. James's, on *Sunday, March 31, 1717.*

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St. JOHN xviii. 36.

*Jesus answered, My Kingdom is not of this  
World.*

S E R M.  
xiv.

**O**NE of those great Effects, which Length of Time is seen to bring along with it, is the Alteration of the Meaning annexed to certain Sounds. The Signification of a Word, well known and understood by Those who first made use of it, is very insensibly varied, by passing through many Mouths, and by being taken and given by Multitudes, in common Discourse; till it often comes to stand for a Complication of Notions, as distant from the original Intention of it, nay, as contradictory to it, as Darkness is to Light. The Ignorance and Weakness of Some, and the Passions and Bad Designs of Others, are the great Instruments

struments of this Evil : which, even when it ~~S E R M.~~ seems to affect only indifferent Matters, ought ~~xiv.~~ ~~~~~~~~~ in reason to be opposed, as it tends, in it's Nature, to confound Men's Notions in weightier Points ; but, when it hath once invaded the most Sacred and Important Subjects, ought, in Duty, to be resisted with a more open and undisguised Zeal, as what toucheth the very Vitals of all that is Good, and is just going to take from Men's Eyes the Boundaries of Right and Wrong.

The only Cure for this *Evil*, in Cases of so great Concern, is to have recourse to the Originals of Things, to the Law of Reason, in those Points which can be traced back thither; and to the Declarations of *Jesus Christ*, and his immediate Followers, in such Matters as took their Rise solely from those Declarations. For the Case is plainly this, that Words and Sounds have had such an Effect, (not upon the Nature of Things, which is unmoveable, but) upon the Minds of Men in thinking of them ; that the very same Word remaining, (which at first truly represented One certain Thing,) by having Multitudes of new inconsistent Ideas, in every Age, and every Year, added to it, becomes itself the greatest Hindrance to the true understanding of the Nature of the Thing first intended by it.

**S E R M.** For Instance, *Religion*, in St. James's Days, **xiv.** was Virtue and Integrity, as to Ourselves, and ~~Charity~~ Charity and Beneficence to Others ; before God, even the *Father*, *Jam. i. 27.* By Degrees, it is come to signify, in most of the Countries throughout the whole World, the Performance of every thing almost, except Virtue and Charity ; and particularly, a punctual Exactness in a Regard to particular *Times*, *Places*, *Forms*, and *Modes*, diversified according to the various Humours of Men ; recommended and practised under the avowed Name of *External Religion* : *Two Words*, which, in the Sense fixed upon them by many *Christians*, *God hath put asunder* ; and which, therefore, *no Man should join together*. And accordingly, the Notion of a *Religious Man* differs in every Country, just as much as *Times*, *Places*, *Ceremonies*, *Imaginary Austerities*, and all other *Outward Circumstances*, are different and various : Whereas in truth, though a Man, truly *Religious* in other Respects, may make use of such Things ; yet they cannot be the least Part of his *Religion*, properly so called, any more than his Food, or his Raiment, or any other Circumstance of his Life.

Thus, likewise, the *Worship* of *God*, to be paid by *Christians*, was, in *our Saviour's Time*, and in his own plain Words, the *Worship* of the

the Father *in Spirit and Truth*; and this de- s E R M. clared to be one great End proposed in the xiv. *Christian Dispensation*: *The Hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him*; John iv. 23. But the *Notion* of it is become quite another thing: and in many *Christian Countries*, that which still retains the Name of the *Worship* of *God*, is indeed the Neglect, and the Diminution of the Father; and the *Worship* of other Beings besides, and more than, the *Father*. And this, performed in such a manner, as that any *indifferent Spectator* would conclude, that neither the *Consciences* nor *Understandings* of Men, neither *Spirit* nor *Truth*, were at all concerned in the Matter; or rather, that they had been banished from it by an express Command. In the mean time the *Word*, or *Sound*, still remains the same in Discourse. The whole Lump of indigested, and inconsistent Notions and Practises; Every thing that is solemnly said, or done, when the *Worship* of *God* is professed, is equally covered under that *general Name*; and, by the help of using the same *Original Word*, passeth easily for the thing itself. Again,

*Prayer*, in all our *Lord's Directions* about it, and particularly in that *Form*, which He him-

SE R M. himself taught his Followers, was a calm, un-  
 xiv. disturbed, *Address to God*, under the Notion  
 of a *Father*, expressing those Sentiments and  
 Wishes before Him, which every sincere Mind  
 ought to have. But the same *Word*, by the  
 help of Men, and voluminous Rules of Art,  
 is come to signify *Heat* and *Flame*, in such a  
 manner, and to such a degree, that a Man  
 may be in the *best Disposition* in the World,  
 and yet not be *devout* enough to *Pray*: and  
 many an honest Person hath been perplexed,  
 by this Means, with Doubts and Fears of be-  
 ing incapable of *Praying*, for want of an *In-*  
*tenseness of Heat*; which hath no more relation  
 to the Duty, than a Man's being in a *Fever*  
 hath, to the Sincerity of his Professions, or Ad-  
 dresses to any *Earthly Prince*.

Once more; the *Love of God*, and of our  
 Saviour, was at first, in his own Words, and  
 those of St. John, many Times repeated, the  
*keeping his Commandments, or doing his Will*.  
 John xiv. 15, 21, 23. Ch. xv. 10. 1 John ii. 5.  
 Ch. v. 3. 2 John 6. But the *Notion* of it was,  
 it seems, left very jejune; and so hath been  
 improved by his *later Followers*, till the same  
*Name*, still kept up in the Language of *Chris-*  
*tians*, is far removed from the *Thing* principal-  
 ly and first intended; and is come by degrees  
 to signify a violent *Passion*, *Commotion*, and *Ec-*  
*stasy*

*flasy*, venting it self in such sort of Expressions ~~and~~ R M. and Disorders, as other *Passions* do: and this ~~xiv.~~ ~~~~~~~~~ regulated and defined, by such a Variety of Imaginations, that an ordinary *Christian*, with the utmost Sincerity in his Heart, is filled with nothing but eternal Suspicions, Doubts, and Perplexities, whether he hath any thing of the true *Love of God*, or not.

I have mentioned these *Particulars*, not only to shew the Evil it self; and to how great a Degree the *Nature* of Things hath suffered, in the Opinions of Men, by the Alteration of the Sense of the same *Words* and *Sounds*: but to give you Occasion to observe, that there can be no Cure for it, in *Christians*, but to go back to the *New Testament* it self; because *There* alone we shall find the Original Intention of such *Words*; or the *Nature* of the Things designed to be signified by them, declared and fixed by our *Lord*, or his *Apostles* from him, by some such Marks, as may, if we will attend to them, guide and guard us in our Notions of those Matters, in which we are most of all concerned.

It is with this View, that I have chosen those *Words*, in which our *Lord* himself declared the *Nature* of *his own Kingdom*. This *Kingdom* of *Christ*, is the same with the *Church* of *Christ*. And the *Notion* of the *Church* of

SERM. Christ, which, at first, was only the Number, xiv. small or great, of Those who believed *Him* to be the *Messiah*; or of Those who subjected themselves to *Him*, as their *King*, in the Affair of *Religion*; having since that Time been so diversified by the various *Alterations* it hath undergone, that it is almost impossible so much as to number up the many *inconsistent Images* that have come, by daily Additions, to be united together in it: Nothing, I think, can be more useful, than to consider the same thing, under some other *Image*, which hath not been so much used; nor consequently so much defaced. And since the *Image* of *His Kingdom*, is *That*, under which our Lord himself chose to represent it: We may be sure that, if we sincerely examine our Notion of his *Church*, by what He faith of his *Kingdom*, that *it is not of this World*, we shall exclude out of it, every thing that he would have excluded; and then, what remains will be true, pure, and uncorrupted. And what I have to say, in order to this, will be comprehended under Two *General Heads*.

I. As the *Church* of *Christ* is the *Kingdom* of *Christ*, *He* himself is *King*: and in this it is implied, that *He* is himself the sole *Law-giver* to his *Subjects*, and himself the sole *Judge* of their *Behaviour*, in the Affairs of *Conscience* and

Eter-

*Eternal Salvation.* And in this Sense, therefore, *His Kingdom is not of this World*; that *He hath, in those Points, left behind Him, no visible, human Authority, no Vicegerents who can be said properly to supply his Place; no Interpreters, upon whom his Subjects are absolutely to depend; no Judges over the Consciences or Religion of his People.* For if this were so, that any such absolute *Vicegerent Authority*, either for the making *New Laws*, or interpreting *Old ones*, or *judging his Subjects, in Religious Matters*, were lodged in any Men upon Earth; the Consequence would be, that what still retains the Name of the *Church of Christ*, would not be the *Kingdom of Christ*, but the *Kingdom of those Men, vested with such Authority.* For, whoever hath such an *Authority of making Laws*, is so far a *King*: and whoever can add new *Laws* to those of *Christ*, equally obligatory, is as truly a *King*, as *Christ himself is*: Nay, whoever hath an *absolute Authority to interpret any written, or spoken Laws*; it is *He*, who is truly the *Law-giver*, to all *Intents and Purposes*; and not the Person who first wrote, or spake them.

In human Society, the *Interpretation of Laws*, may, of necessity, be lodged, in some Cases, in the Hands of Those who were not originally the *Legislators*. But this is not ab-

serm. *solute*; nor of bad Consequence to *Society*:  
 xiv. because the *Legislators* can resume the *Interpre-  
 tation* into their own Hands, as They are Wit-  
 nesses to what passes in the World; and as  
 They can, and will, sensibly interpose in all  
 those Cases, in which their Interposition be-  
 comes necessary. And therefore, They are  
 still properly the *Legislators*. But it is other-  
 wise in *Religion*, or the Kingdom of *Christ*.  
 He himself never interposeth, since his first  
 Promulgation of his *Law*, either to convey  
*Infallibility* to Such as pretend to handle it over  
 again; or to assert the true *Interpretation* of it,  
 amidst the various and contradictory Opinions  
 of Men about it. If *He* did certainly thus in-  
 terpose, He himself would still be the *Legisla-  
 tor*. But, as *He* doth not; if such an absolute  
*Authority* be once lodged with Men, under the  
 Notion of *Interpreters*, They then become the  
*Legislators*, and not *Christ*; and They rule in  
 their own *Kingdom*, and not in *His*.

It is the same thing, as to Rewards and Pu-  
 nishments, to carry forward the great End of  
 his *Kingdom*. If any Men upon Earth have a  
*Right* to add to the *Sanctions* of his *Laws*; that  
 is, to increase the Number, or alter the Na-  
 ture, of the *Rewards* and *Punishments* of his  
 Subjects, in Matters of Conscience, or Salvati-  
 on: They are so far *Kings* in his stead; and

Reign in *their own* Kingdom, and not in *His*. SERM. So it is, whenever They erect *Tribunals*, and xiv. exercise a *Judgment* over the Consciences of ~~the~~ Men; and assume to Themselves the Determination of such Points, as cannot be determined, but by *One* who knows the Hearts; or, when They make any of their own Declarations, or Decisions, to concern and affect the State of *Christ's* Subjects, with regard to the Favour of God: this is so far, the taking *Christ's* Kingdom out of *His* Hands, and placing it in their own.

Nor is this matter at all made better by their declaring Themselves to be *Vicegerents*, or *Law-makers*, or *Judges*, under *Christ*, in order to carry on the Ends of his Kingdom. For it comes to this at last, since it doth not seem fit to *Christ* himself to interpose so as to prevent or remedy all their Mistakes and Contradictions; that, if They have this Power of interpreting, or adding, Laws; and Judging Men; in such a Sense, that *Christians* shall be indispensably and absolutely obliged to obey those *Laws*, and to submit to those *Decisions*; I say, if They have this Power lodged with them, then the *Kingdom*, in which they rule, is not the *Kingdom* of *Christ*, but of *Themselves*; *He* doth not rule in it, but *They*: And, whether They happen to agree with *Him*, or [to differ from

SER M. Him, as long as They are the *Law-givers*, and  
 xiv. *Judges*, without any Interposition from *Christ*,  
 either to guide or correct their *Decisions*, They  
 are *Kings* of his *Kingdom*, and not *Christ Jesus*.

If therefore, the *Church* of *Christ* be the *Kingdom* of *Christ*; it is essential to it, that *Christ* himself be the Sole *Law-giver*, and Sole *Judge* of his *Subjects*, in all Points relating to the Favour or Displeasure of *Almighty God*; and that All His *Subjects*, in what Station soever they may be, are equally *Subjects* to *Him*; and that No One of them, any more than Another, hath *Authority*, either to make *New Laws* for *Christ's Subjects*; or to impose a *Sense* upon the *Old Ones*, which is the same thing; or to *Judge*, *Censure*, or *Punish*, the *Servants* of *Another Master*, in Matters relating purely to *Conscience*, or *Salvation*. If any Person hath any other Notion, either thro' a long Use of Words with Inconsistent Meanings, or thro' a Negligence of Thought; let him but ask himself, whether the *Church* of *Christ* be the *Kingdom* of *Christ*, or not? And, if it be, whether this Notion of it doth not absolutely exclude all other *Legislators* and *Judges*, in Matters relating to *Conscience*, or the Favour of *God*; or, whether it can be *His Kingdom*, if any Mortal Men have such a Power of *Legislation* and *Judgment* in it. *Will his inquiry*

will bring Us back to the first, which is the ~~S E R M.~~  
only True, Account of the *Church of Christ*, ~~xiv.~~  
or the *Kingdom of Christ*, in the Mouth of a ~~W~~  
*Christian*; That it is the Number of Men,  
whether Small or Great, whether Dispersed or  
United, who truly and sincerely are Subjects to  
*Jesus Christ* alone, as their *Law-giver and Judge*,  
in Matters relating to the Favour of God, and  
their *Eternal Salvation*.

II. The next principal Point is, that, if the *Church* be the *Kingdom of Christ*; and this *Kingdom be not of this World*: this must appear from the Nature and End of the *Laws of Christ*; and of those Rewards and Punishments, which are the *Sanctions* of his *Laws*. Now his *Laws* are Declarations, relating to the Favour of God in another State after this. They are Declarations of those Conditions to be performed, in this World, on our Part, without which God will not make us Happy in that to come. And they are almost All general Appeals to the *Will* of that God; to his *Nature*, known by the Common Reason of Mankind; and to the Imitation of that *Nature*, which must be our *Perfection*. The *keeping his Commandments* is declared the *Way to Life*; and the *doing his Will*, the Entrance into the *Kingdom of Heaven*. The being *Subjects to Christ*, is to this very End, that We may the

SERM. better and more effectually perform the *Will* of  
xiv. *God*. The *Laws* of this *Kingdom*, therefore, as  
~~~~ *Christ* left them, have nothing of *this World* in  
their View; no Tendency, either to the Exalta-
tion of *Some*, in worldly Pomp and Dignity; or
to their absolute Dominion over the Faith and
Religious Conduct of *Others* of his Subjects; or
to the erecting of any Sort of *Temporal Kingdom*,
under the Covert and Name of a *Spiritual* one.

The *Sanctions* of *Christ's Law* are *Rewards* and *Punishments*. But of what sort? Not the Rewards of this World; not the Offices, or Glories, of this State; not the Pains of *Prisons*, *Banishments*, *Fines*, or any lesser and more *moderate Penalties*; nay, not the much lesser *Negative Discouragements* that belong to *Human Society*. *He* was far from thinking that *These* could be the Instruments of such a *Persuasion*, as *He* thought acceptable to *God*. But, as the Great End of his *Kingdom*, was to guide Men to Happiness, after the short Images of it were over here below; so, *He* took his *Motives* from that Place, where his *Kingdom* first began, and where it was at last to end; from those *Rewards* and *Punishments* in a future State, which had no relation to this World: And, to shew that his *Kingdom* was *not of this World*, all the *Sanctions* which *he* thought fit to give to *His Laws*, were *not of this World* at all.

St. Paul understood this so well, that He S E R M. gives an Account of His own Conduct, and that xiv. of Others in the same Station, in these Words, *Knowing the Terror of the Lord, we persuade Men*: whereas, in too many Christian Countries, since his Days, if Some, who profess to succeed *Him*, were to give an Account of their own Conduct, it must be in a quite contrary Strain; *Knowing the Terrors of this World, and having them in our Power, We do, not persuade Men, but force their outward Profession against their inward Persuasion.*

Now, wherever *this* is practised; whether in a great degree, or a small; in *that* Place there is so far a Change, from a *Kingdom* which is *not of this World*, to a *Kingdom* which *is of this World*. As soon as ever you hear of any of the *Engines of this World*, whether of the greater, or the lesser sort, you must immediately think that then, and so far, the *Kingdom of this World* takes place. For, if the very **Essence** of God's Worship be *Spirit and Truth*; If *Religion* be *Virtue and Charity*, under the *Belief* of a Supreme Governour and Judge; if *True Real Faith* cannot be the *Effect of Force*; and, if there can be no *Reward* where there is no *Willing Choice*: then, in all, or any of these Cases, to apply *Force or Flattery, Worldly Pleasure or Pain*; is to act contrary to the Interests of *True*

S E R M. True Religion, as it is plainly opposite to the
 xiv. Maxims upon which *Christ* founded his King-
 dom; who chose the *Motives* which are *not of*
this World, to support a *Kingdom* which *is not*
of this World. And indeed, it is too visible to
 be hid, that wherever the *Rewards* and *Punish-
 ments* are changed, from Future to Present,
 from the World to come, to the World now
 in Possession; there, the *Kingdom* founded by
 our *Saviour* is, in the Nature of it, so far
 changed, that it is become, in such a degree,
 what He professed, *His Kingdom was not*:
 that is, *of this World*, of the same sort with
 other ~~Christian Earthly~~ Kingdoms, in which
 the *Rewards* are, *Worldly Honours, Posts,
 Offices, Pomp, Attendance, Dominion*; and
 the *Punishments* are, *Prisons, Fines, Banish-
 ments, Gallies, and Racks*; or something *Less*,
 of the same sort.

If *these* can be the true Supports of a *King-
 dom* which is *not of this World*; then Sincerity,
 and Hypocrisy; Religion, and No Religion;
 Force, and Persuasion; A Willing Choice,
 and a Terrified Heart; are become the same
 Things: Truth and Falshood stand in need of
 the same Methods, to propagate and support
 them; and our *Saviour* himself was little ac-
 quainted with the *Right* way of increasing
 the Number of such *Subjects*, as He willed
 for.

for. If He had but at first enlightened the ~~S E R M.~~
Powers of this World, as He did St. *Paul*; and ~~xiv.~~
employed the *Sword* which They bore, and ~~the~~
the *Favours* They had in their hands, to bring
Subjects into his *Kingdom*; this had been an
Expeditious and an Effectual Way, according
to the Conduct of some of his professed Fol-
lowers, to have had a Glorious and Extensive
Kingdom, or *Church*. But this was not his De-
sign; unless it could be compassed in quite a
different way.

And therefore, when You see *Our Lord*, in
His Methods, so far removed from Those of
Many of his Disciples; when You read No-
thing, in his *Doctrine* about his own *Kingdom*,
of taking in the Concerns of this World, and
mixing them with those of Eternity; no Com-
mands, that the Frowns and Discouragements
of this present State should in any Case attend
upon Conscience and Religion; no Rules a-
gainst the Enquiry of All His Subjects into his
Original Message from Heaven; no Orders for
the kind and charitable Force of *Penalties*, or
Capital Punishments, to make Men think and
chuse aright; no Calling upon the *secular*
Arm, whenever the *Magistrate* should become
Christian, to inforce his *Doctrines*, or to back
his *Spiritual Authority*; but, on the contrary,
as plain a Declaration as a few Words can make,
that

S E R M. that *His Kingdom is not of this World* : I say
xiv. when You see this, from the whole Tenor of
the *Gospel*, so vastly opposite to Many who take
his Name into their Mouths, the Question
with you ought to be, Whether He did not
know the Nature of his own *Kingdom*, or
Church, better than Any since his Time ?
whether you can suppose, *He* left any such
Matters to be decided against *Himself*, and his
own express Professions ; and, whether, if an
Angel from Heaven should give you any Ac-
count of his *Kingdom*, contrary to what He
himself hath done, it can be of any Weight, or
Authority, with *Christians*.

I have now made some such Observations,
drawn from the *Church* being the *Kingdom* of
Christ, and not of any *Men* in that *Kingdom* ;
from the *Nature* of his *Laws*, and from those
Rewards and *Punishments*, which are the *Sanc-*
tions of those *Laws* ; as lead us naturally into
the true *Notion* of the *Church*, or *Kingdom*, of
Christ, by excluding out of it every *thing* in-
consistent with *His* being *King*, *Lawgiver*, and
Judge ; as well as with the *Nature* of his *Laws*,
and of his *Promises* and *Threatnings*. I will
only make *Two* or *Three* Observations, ground-
ed upon this ; and so conclude. And,

1. From what hath been said it is very plain
in general, that the *Groſſest* Mistakes in Judg-
ment,

ment, about the Nature of *Christ's Kingdom*, S E R M. or *Church*, have arisen from hence, That Men xiv. have argued from Other Visible Societies, and ~~~ Other Visible *Kingdoms of this World*, to what ought to be Visible and Sensible, in *His Kingdom*: Constantly leaving out of their *Notion*, the most Essential Part of it, that *Christ* is *King* in his own *Kingdom*; forgetting this *King* himself, because He is not now seen by mortal Eyes; and substituting *Others* in his Place, as *Law-givers* and *Judges*, in the same Points, in which *He* must either *Alone*, or not at all, be *Law-giver* and *Judge*: not contented with such a *Kingdom* as He established, and desires to reign in; but urging and contending that *His Kingdom* must be like *Other Kingdoms*. Whereas He hath positively warned them against any such Arguings, by assuring Them that this *Kingdom* is *His Kingdom*, and that it is *not of this World*; and therefore that No one of *His Subjects* is *Law-giver* and *Judge* over *Others* of them, in Matters relating to *Salvation*, but *He* alone; and that We must not frame our Ideas, from the *Kingdoms of this World*, of what ought to be, in a visible and sensible Manner, in *His Kingdom*.

2. From what hath been said it appears, that the *Kingdom of Christ*, which is the *Church of Christ*, is the *Number* of Persons who are Sincere,
~~~~~

SERM. cereley, and Willingly, Subjects to *Him*, as  
xiv. *Law-giver and Judge*, in all Matters truly re-  
lating to Conscience, or Eternal Salvation. And the more close and immediate this Regard to *Him* is, the more certainly and the more evidently true it is, that They are of his *Kingdom*. This may appear fully to their own Satisfaction, if They have recourse to *Him* himself, in the *Gospel*; if They think it a sufficient Authority, that He hath declared the *Conditions* of their *Salvation*, and that no Man upon Earth hath any Authority to declare any other, or to add one Tittle to them; if They resolve to perform what They see, He layeth a Stress upon; and if They trust no Mortal, with the absolute Direction of their *Consciences*, the Pardon of their Sins, or the determining of their Interest in God's Favour; but wait for their *Judge*, who alone can bring to Light the *hidden things of Darkness*.

If They feel themselves disposed and resolv-ed to receive the Words of *Eternal Life* from *Himself*; to take their *Faith* from what He himself *once delivered*, who knew better than All the rest of the World what He required of his own *Subjects*; to direct their *Worship* by his Rule, and their whole Practice by the General Law which He laid down: if They feel themselves in this Disposition, They may be  
very

very certain, that They are truly his *Subjects*, S E R M. and Members of his *Kingdom*. Nor need xiv. They envy the Happiness of *Others*, who may ~~ever~~ think it a much more evident Mark of their belonging to the *Kingdom of Christ*, that They have *other* Law-givers, and Judges, in *Christ's Religion*, besides *Jesus Christ*; that They have recourse not to *his own* Words, but the Words of *Others* who profess to interpret them; that They are ready to Submit to this *Interpretation*, let it be what it will; that They have set up to Themselves the *Idol* of an unintelligible *Authority*, both in *Belief*, and *Worship*, and *Practice*; in Words, *under Jesus Christ*, but in Deed and in Truth *over Him*; as it removes the Minds of his *Subjects* from himself, to Weak, and Passionate Men; and as it claims the same Rule and Power in *his Kingdom*, which He himself *alone* can have. But,

3. This will be *Another Observation*, that it evidently destroys the *Rule* and *Authority* of *Jesus Christ*, as *King*, to set up any Other *Authority* in *His Kingdom*, to which His *Subjects* are indispensably and absolutely obliged to Submit their *Coniences*, or their *Conduct*, in is what properly called *Religion*. There are *some* Professed *Christians*, who contend openly for such an *Authority*, as indispensably obliges All around Them to *Unity* of Profel-  
sion;

TERM. sion; that is, to Profess even what They do  
xiv. not, what They cannot, believe to be true.

~ This sounds so grossly, that *Others*, who think They act a glorious Part in opposing such an Enormity, are very willing, for their own sakes, to retain such an *Authority* as shall oblige Men, whatever They themselves think, though not to profess what They do not believe, yet, to forbear the *Profession* and *Publication* of what They do believe, let them believe it of never so great Importance.

Both these *Pretensions* are founded upon the mistaken *Notion* of the *Peace*, as well as *Authority*, of the *Kingdom*, that is, the *Church*, of *Christ*. Which of them is the most insupportable to an honest and a Christian Mind, I am not able to say: because They both equally found the *Authority* of the *Church of Christ*, upon the Ruines of Sincerity and Common Honesty; and mistake *Stupidity* and *Sleep*, for *Peace*; because They would both equally have prevented *All Reformation* where it hath been, and will for ever prevent it where it is not already; and, in a word, because both equally divest *Jesus Christ* of his *Empire in his own Kingdom*; set the Obedience of his *Subjects* loose from *Himself*; and teach them to prostitute their *Consciences* at the Feet of *Others*, who have no Right in such a manner to trample upon them.

The

The *Peace of Christ's Kingdom* is a manly SERM. and Reasonable *Peace*; built upon Charity, <sup>xiv.</sup> and Love, and mutual Forbearance, and receiving one another, as God receives us. As for any other *Peace*; founded upon a Submission of our *Honesty*, as well as our *Understandings*; it is falsely so called. It is not the *Peace of the Kingdom of Christ*; but the *Lethargy* of it: and a *Sleep unto Death*, when his *Subjects* throw off their relation to *Him*; fix their Subjection to *Others*; and even in *Cases*, where They have a Right to see, and where They have a Power to see, his Will, as it really is, shall shut their Eyes, and go blindfold at the Command of *Others*; because those *Others* are pleased to make Themselves the Sole Judges of the Will of their great Lord and Master.

To conclude; The *Church of Christ* is the *Kingdom of Christ*. He is *King* in his own *Kingdom*. He is sole *Law-giver* to his *Subjects*, and sole *Judge*, in *Matters* relating to *Salvation*. His *Laws* and *Sanctions* are plainly fixed: and relate to the *Favour of God*; and not at all to the *Rewards*, or *Penalties*, of *this World*. All his *Subjects* are *equally* his *Subjects*; and, as such, *equally* without *Authority* to alter, to add to, or to *interpret*, his *Laws* so, as to claim the *absolute Submission of Others* to such *Interpretation*. And

S E R M. All are *His Subjects*, and in his Kingdom, who  
xiv. are ruled and governed by *Him*. Their *Faith*  
was once delivered by *Him*. The Conditions  
of their Happiness were once laid down by *Him*.  
The Nature of *God's Worship* was once declar-  
ed by *Him*. And it is easy to judge, whether  
of the Two is most becoming a *Subject* of the  
*Kingdom of Christ*, that is, a *Member* of his  
*Church*; to seek all these Particulars in those  
plain and short Declarations of their *King* and  
*Law-giver* himself: or to hunt after Them,  
thro' the infinite Contradictions, the number-  
less Perplexities, the endless Disputes, of *Weak*  
*Men*, in several Ages, till the Enquirer himself  
is lost in the Labyrinth; and perhaps sits down  
in Despair, or Infidelity. If *Christ* be our  
*King*; let us shew ourselves *Subjects* to *Him*  
alone, in the great Affair of Conscience and E-  
ternal Salvation: and, without Fear of Man's  
Judgment, live and act as becomes Those who  
wait for the Appearance of an All-knowing and  
Impartial Judge; even that *King*, whose *King-  
dom is not of this World*.

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## SERMON XV.

Preached at the Funeral of Mrs. *Elizabeth Howland*, in the Parish-Church of Streatham in Surry, on Friday, May 1, 1719.

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### REVELATIONS xiv. 13.

*I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that They may rest from their Labours; and their Works do follow them.*

**T**HERE is nothing in which the SERM. Weakness of Mankind is more betrayed, than in the Notions commonly received in the World, about Happiness and Unhappiness. We all profess ourselves engaged in the Pursuit of the one, and the avoiding the other; and consequently very much concerned to fix the justest Notions of Them in our Minds. We all feel what a kind of World we now inhabit; and what a sort of

S E R M. Life we now live: How full of Vexations; xv. Troubles, Uneasinesses, and Uncertainties; that is, in other Words, how utterly inconsistent with Happiness. And yet we are commonly so foolish as to call the *Living* only *Happy*; as to think Those *Blessed*, who have Fields, and Houses, and Treasures, in Possession; who yet breath this gross Air, and enjoy the good Things of this sordid Earth. If we see any of Those taken away, in whom we have any Concern; and an End put to their Designs, and a Stop given to the poor Prospect of Happiness They had here below; We are apt to Mourn over This, as some sort of Misery, tho' We know not what; and to think of *Them*, as the Unfortunate; and of *Ourselves*, who remain, as the Happy.

This Frame of Mind is owing, indeed, to that strong Love of the present Life, which the Author of our Nature has Thought fit to implant in Us, in order to make Us *bear a Life*, which otherwise We should not, in many Cases, be able to sustain, so as to answer, in any degree, the Designs of his Wisdom, in placing us in this Scene of Things. But tho' there be somewhat in this, which unavoidably results from the Nature of Man; yet the Excess of this Weakness is to be corrected by Reason and Religion; Both designed for the ridding

ridding Men's Minds of all false Apprehensi- SERM. ons, especially in Matters of so great Import- xv. ance. Sense itself, indeed, is sufficient to satisfy Us very effectually, that this World is not so desirable a State, as that We should be solicitous to confine either Ourselves, or Those whom we wish Happy, to it: And there needs but very little Experience, and the Trial of a very few Days, to make Us *feel* this Truth, without the Trouble of much Thought, or Reflexion. And then, Reason and Religion open to Us another Scene of Things; a future State of Stable Happiness: A State of Ease and Quiet; of Freedom from Pain, and Grief, and Trouble, and Uneasiness; without Uncertainty, or Anxiety, or Fear, or Terror; out of the Reach of what We call Fortune, or Malice, or Envy, or Detraction, or any Evil; and full of all the Real Goods that We can be capable of enjoying.

And as Religion opens to Us the Prospect of such a Scene; so it assures us, it is prepared for the good and virtuous Part of Mankind; for Those who, *by patient Continuance in Well-doing, have sought after Honour, and Glory, and Immortality.* And consequently, it teaches Us to correct these Unjust Conceptions, and Partial Notions, about Happiness;

SER M. not to call any Persons *Blessed* before their  
xv. Death; nor to fix that Appellation upon Any,  
tho' never so Rich, never so Honourable,  
never so Good, whilst They are in a State full  
of a Succession of hazardous Trials, and Un-  
certain Events; of Tormenting Cares, and  
Uneasy Disappointments: And to account  
*Those* only properly *Blessed*, who have lived,  
as Men ought to live, in the Practice of all  
Virtue, and Goodness; and are removed out  
of such a State as this; and safely arrived at a  
better.

This is the *Lesson* which the Words I have  
now read to you, will easily lead Us to: If  
We consider Them, not with Regard only to  
those Times to which They may be supposed  
peculiarly to relate, in their first Intention;  
but as a General *Lesson*, extending itself to all  
Times and Places, and adapted to the Ordina-  
ry State of the *Christian* World. They are  
introduced in a Manner so solemn and extraor-  
dinary, as to raise such a Surprize in the Hear-  
ers, as naturally increases their Attention.  
*I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me,*  
*Write, Blessed are the Dead, which die in the*  
*Lord: ---- Yea, saith the Spirit, that They may*  
*rest from their Labours; and their Works do fol-*  
*low them.*

In prosecution, therefore, of my present S E R M. Design, in so general an Extent, it will, I <sup>xv.</sup> think, be natural and proper, from these  Words,

I. To consider, Who they are that may be truly said, according to the Terms of the Gospel, to *Die in the Lord*: So that We may judge, Who They are that have a Title to that Word *Blessed*, so solemnly here pronounced upon Them.

II. To shew on what Accounts They may be said to be *Blessed*, from what is included in the latter Part of the Words, *That They may rest from their Labours ; and their Works do follow them.*

I. The *first* Point is, to consider, Who they are that may be truly said, in the Sense of the Gospel, *To die in the Lord*: So that We may judge, Who they are that have a Title to the Word, *Blessed*, so solemnly here pronounced upon Them. And if we be sincere and in earnest, This Enquiry will quickly come to an Issue; and presently end in a certain Resolution. For every honest *Christian*, who searches in order to find the Truth, will presently collect from the original Design, from the whole Tenor, and from the express Words of the *Gospel*, that They only can be properly said to *Die*

**S E R M.** *in the Lord*, who may truly be said to have *lived*  
**xv.** *in the Lord*; that is, to have lived so, as that  
Our Blessed Lord will own Them at the last  
Day for his true Followers. *To Die in the*  
*Lord*, is *To die in the Happy relation of a*  
*sincere Disciple to Jesus Christ*, and of a good  
and faithful Servant to our Great Master.  
And who can be said to *die* thus, but They  
who have contracted that Relation by a for-  
mer Life, led by his Rules, and conducted by  
his Will? They, who have shewn themselves  
*His Disciples* by such plain Marks and Cha-  
racters, as He himself has declared to be the  
only Marks and Characters by which He will  
know them?

This then We may certainly conclude, That  
*To die in the Lord*, cannot signify merely to  
die in the Faith of *Jesus Christ*; believing and  
confessing Him to be our Lord and Master;  
acknowledging him the Saviour of the  
World; and confidently applying, at last, the  
Remedy of his Merits to the Evil of a Life  
spent in the willful and habitual Transgres-  
sion of his Laws. If the Reason of the  
Thing, and the Nature of God himself, did  
not lead Us to this, the express Declaration of  
*Christ* himself would be sufficient, *Not every*  
*one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter*  
*into the Kingdom of Heaven, but He that doth*  
*the*

*the Will of my Father which is in Heaven.* SERM. And to do the Will of his Father, is to live in xv. a sincere and uniform Obedience to all God's Commands, and all his Laws equally, as far as They are made known to Us.

Nor is it a more secure Presumption in Men, to imagine that, in order to *die in the Lord*, or to die a happy Death, it is enough to take Refuge in the Sorrow and Contrition of a Death-bed; or in confessing and detesting those Sins in Death, which They would never be once persuaded to quit through their whole Life. For *to die in the Lord*, being to die in the Relation of a True Disciple to Him; and the Marks and Characters of that Relation having been settled and declared by Himself, and established long ago upon the Nature of his Design, and the End of his Appearance in the World: The Imaginations of Men are not to be consulted; but his Will, and his Declarations. And as the great End of his Appearance was to preach Repentance to the Living, and not to the Dying; as Men are not called in the Gospel only, or chiefly, to grieve for their Sins; but to forsake them, and amend their Lives, by *bringing forth Fruits meet for Repentance*; and as *the Wrath of God is reveled in it from Heaven* against all Wilful and Habitual Sin: It is impossible for Any, who are

S E R M. not resolved to flatter themselves into Destruction, to conceive that *to die in the Lord*, or to die happily, can possibly be the Result of Sorrow and Grief at the last Moments ; or that any such Frame of Mind can be the End aimed at by the Dispensation of the Gospel, or any good Foundation of that *Blessedness* which is declared in it.

No one can be said, with any sort of Propriety, to die a happy Death, or *to die in the Lord*, who, at the Time of his Death, has not a Title, upon the express Terms of the Gospel, to Eternal Life. And there are otherguise Conditions of Eternal Life laid down to *Christians*, than Sorrow and Contrition for Sins which They can now no longer live in. *If thou wouldest enter into Life, keep the Commandments. Ye are my Friends, if ye do what I command you. The Righteous shall go into Life Eternal, and the Wicked into Everlasting Punishment.* And *He only, who doth Righteousness, is Righteous*, in the Sense of the Gospel. These are Declarations sufficient to awaken any *Christians* out of so fatal a Dream, as They are in, who have Recourse to Inventions of their own ; who indulge Themselves in laying Schemes inconsistent with the whole Design of *Christianity* ; and in forming Projects of Salvation, which the Gospel of Salvation

tion knows nothing of. For as They only ~~SERM.~~ shall inherit Eternal Life, who have patiently persevered in Well-doing; as far as the Terms of God's Favour have been made known to Us: So it is as plain, as Words can make it, that the only Road to a happy Death, is a *Christian* Life; and that they only can, with any Degree of Assurance, he said to *Die in the Lord*, who have lived with all the Essential Characters of his Disciples upon them; whose Lives have been conducted by his Laws, and filled with the Fruits of his Spirit. I come now to the *Second* Thing I proposed,

II. To consider, on what Accounts They may be said to be *Blessed*, from what is included in the latter Part of the Words, *That they may rest from their Labours; and Their Works do follow them.*

1. They *rest from their Labours*. This *Life* is as full of Cares, and Fears, and Uneasiness, and Disappointments, as it is of Days: And, in the Scripture-phrase, *Man is born to Trouble*, and as naturally tends to it, *as the Sparks fly upwards*. Consider a little the Conditions and Terms, upon which, generally speaking, We *live* in this World; and You will see, it is no very inconsiderable Thing to *rest from the Labours* of such a Life. If We continue in this

SE R M. this State for any Time, We live, not in order  
xv. to die one single Death at last, at the End of  
our Term; but rather to die a Thousand  
Deaths, through the several Days, and  
Months, and Years, We are said *to live*. We  
*live*, indeed, in Name and Appearance: That  
is, We breath, and move, and perceive, and  
have Senses. But We live, either to feel such  
Degrees of Misery in Ourselves, or to see such  
Scenes of Unhappiness in Others, as are suf-  
ficient often to interrupt our Course of Joy,  
and to embitter the few Pleasures this State  
can pretend to. We often live to inherit  
Sickness and Pain; to be Burnt by Fevers;  
or to be Tormented by the Returns of Stone or  
Gout; or to be consumed and wearied out by  
some other Distemper, which has it in its  
Power to make Us uneasy to Ourselves, and  
troublesome to those about Us. We often  
survive the Loss of our Estates, our Health,  
our Reputation; Every one of which, to Ma-  
ny, is worse than Death itself. We live  
sometimes to see Ourselves sacrificed to the  
Fraud and Perfidy of Others; to be forsaken  
by Professed Friends, and insulted by Outra-  
geous Enemies; to be persecuted by the Ma-  
lice of Evil Tongues, and covered with the  
Reproaches of Men.

We spend perhaps some Years ; and watch ~~S E R M.~~  
Days and Nights, in projecting some Scheme xv.  
of Happiness : And in bringing this to a tolerable Perfection. And when, by much Labour, We think We are come to the End of our Wishes and Desires ; *somewhat* almost always intervenes between Us and Happiness ; and is appointed to stop Us in our Career. After much Labour in a tempestuous Sea, We are perhaps shipwrecked in the Port itself : And are either taken off within View of the Possession ; or else the Possession itself is so far from answering our Expectations, that our former Expectations, by being disappointed, do Themselves only serve to make Us the more completely miserable, in the midst of Possession.

But as these daily Disappointments never weary out the natural Desire and Pursuit of Happiness ; but it returns, after numberless Trials, to Fresh Proposals and New Projects, with the same Eagerness of Expectation and Assurance ; there is nothing more common than for Men still to go on to imagine, that the Accomplishment and Success of such and such particular Wishes and Designs, would go a great Way towards a perfect Ease and Contentment. But when again, these are permitted to have Success ; (as they are sometimes,

S E R M. times, to convince Us of our own Incapacity  
xv. of Judging in this Case;) What are We the  
nearer? Something or other again invades  
our Repose: And We find it in the Power of  
a Multitude of Accidents, never to be fore-  
seen, to Discompose and Ruine the whole Fa-  
bric of Happiness which We have raised in  
our Imaginations. Nay, whatever it be,  
from which We have any Expectations of Hap-  
piness, it is frequently seen that This itself,  
upon that very Account, is what serves to  
make Us most Unhappy.

Such is the Condition of our Life here!  
Either, not to have our most passionate Wishes  
granted Us; which is present Unhappiness:  
Or, if We have them granted, to find, by a  
comfortless Experiment, that We have  
sought *Misery* instead of *Happiness*; and em-  
brace a vain Shadow, where We expected a  
substantial Good. Our Enjoyments, at best,  
are but Few: And those Few continually  
dashed with the Mixture of many Ills, and the  
Intervention of Unforeseen Misfortunes, which  
are powerful enough to spoil our *Good*, and  
change it into *Evil*. In the mean while,  
*Iniquity* often triumphs; and extends its Con-  
quests over all that can be called Virtuous and  
Praise-worthy. The *Best* that can be said is,  
That, tho' Virtue always tends, in its Nature,

to

to Peace and Happiness, yet here below, S E R M. There is one Event to the Righteous and the xv. Wicked: But Worse may too often be said, ~~~~~ That the Good Man, who alone has a Claim to the *Favour* of Providence, seems, sometimes, in this State, to have little *Title* even to its *Protection*. *In the midst of Life*, are We thus *in Death*: In the midst of *Virtue* itself, encompassed with the Punishments of *Vice*: In the midst of Enjoyment, under the Apprehension of Loss and Disappointment: And the higher We are seated in what We have Thought fit to imagine our Happiness, so much the nearer are We to a Precipice, and liable to a so much greater and more terrible Downfal.

When We take a View of *Life*, encompassed with all these Circumstances, Who would not, in Reason, be led to rejoice in the Thought of *Resting from the Labours* of such a Life? And were We happily removed out of it; how unkind an Office of Love should We think it, were it possible, for the Wishes and Desires of Friends to call Us back again? To *live*, indeed, even in such a State as this, is made the Natural Desire of Men: And to *Die* is appointed to carry somewhat of Terror along with it, for wise and good Reasons. But were We once successfully delivered from the

SE R M. Waves of this Tempestuous Sea ; what could  
xv. move Us to trust Ourselves to their Mercy  
again ? Were we once gone off this Stage of  
Combats and Hazards, with Glory ; What  
could incline Us to renew our own Dangers  
and Labours ? Were we once *dead in the*  
*Lord*, with the Conscience of a well-spent  
Life, and a virtuous Conversation ; What  
could be of Force enough to engage Us wil-  
lingly to revive our Acquaintance with a  
World of Cares and Troubles ; and to live a  
Life over again, attended with all Those Un-  
evenesses, Sollicitudes, Disquiets, Expectations,  
Disappointments, Hopes, Fears, Despairs,  
Small Goods, and Great Evils, which We  
have before seen and felt to make up its  
Train ; and to be inseparably united to it ?  
*Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord:*  
*For they rest from their Labours.* This is one  
Consideration.

<sup>1</sup> 2. The other Consideration is, That They  
not only *rest from their Labours* of such a  
Life as this is ; but *Their Works do follow them* :  
that is, The Life of Good Works which  
They could not be said to *die in the Lord* ; (as  
I have before explained it;) This Life of Uni-  
versal Virtue is remembered, by the Mercy of  
God, to their Eternal Honour and Advantage.  
Those

Those Works *follow them*, to which the Pro-~~S E R M.~~  
mise of Glory and Immortality is made; to xv.  
which the Favour of God is annexed, and ~~the~~  
the Rewards of Heaven solemnly promised:  
And these are the *Works of the Spirit*; the  
Effects of Noble Principles, and the Fruits of  
a well-grounded Faith; the Works of Love,  
Beneficence, Justice, Patience, Humility, and  
all the Train of Virtues, the End of which is  
declared in the Gospel to be *Eternal Life*, and  
Blessedness for ever.

This is the State of those who *die in the Lord*, if we take in both Parts of what is here pronounced, to prove and denominate them truly *Blessed*. *They rest from their Labours*: They cease from a Life of Impertinence, Imperfection, and Misery. And *Their Works follow them*: They change this Life, for the Rewards of those Virtues which they practised in it. They Change this Miserable, Low, Unsatisfactory, and Uneasy State, for Another in which neither Misery, nor Dis-satisfaction, nor Uneasiness, are known: But, in their stead, All that can be wished for; and Every thing that can result from the Favour and Love of God; from a Mind filled with the Remembrance of a sincere and upright Conduct; from a Conscience at Peace with itself; and from the Assurance of a last-

SERM.ing and certain Happiness, communicated by  
xv. never-failing Goodness, and guarded by Al-  
mighty Power. How *Blessed* therefore, above  
what We can express or conceive, must the  
Good *Christian* be, when, instead of the  
*Images of Death* which fill up the Scenes of  
what we call *Life* here below, He shall know,  
in Himself, what *Life* is ; and be satisfied, by  
his own Experience, that to *Live* is to be *Happy* ! When, instead of the Uncertainties and  
Disappointments ; the Vicissitudes of Pain and Pleasure ; the Changes of Sorrow and Joy ;  
the Returns of Evil ; the Afflictions, Calami-  
ties, and Reproaches, in the midst of which  
he has passed his Hours here on Earth ; He  
shall meet with the Certainty of a stable Ha-  
bitation ; with Unmixed and pure Happiness ;  
with an Unmoveable State of all that is truly  
Good, without the Fear or Suspicion of Loss  
or Diminution ; out of the reach of Tempests  
and Convulsions, and sudden Turns of Empire  
and Fortune ! With a State, in which the  
Established Favour of God is the Security ;  
and in which the Perfection of Mutual Sin-  
cerity and Unbounded Charity cannot fail to  
make Society the greatest Delight, of which  
Rational Creatures are capable !

The Time will not allow Me to enlarge  
farther upon this. I have endeavoured to  
give

give You as useful Lessons as I could, from S E R M. the Words I first read to You ; and as proper, xv. as any can be, to the present Occasion of our ~~our~~ meeting together. But I must not end here. Whilst we are paying our last Regards to the Remains of an excellent Person, who is gone before Us to a Blessed Immortality, I esteem myself particularly engaged, in Justice and Gratitude, not to pass over in Silence what I think, or know, to be due to the *Memory* of *One*, who has a Right to our Remembrance ; and to the *Example* of *One*, in whose Life and Death We may see the *Truth* of what I have been laying before you.

I will begin where all true Religion either does, or ought to begin. As it pleased God to bless Her with an uncommon Degree of Good Sense and Understanding ; so, it was manifestly her great Endeavour to make a proper Use of so great an Happiness, by laying the Foundation both of her Faith and Conduct in the most rational, the most just, and most certain Notions of God, and of his Perfections, within her own Mind. By these She judged of Doctrines, and of Practices : And by These She was led into that Just and Lovely Notion of Religion, which supported her under the Evils of this Life, and carried Her forward to the Enjoyments of a Better.

S E R M. Upon this Foundation She embraced *Christianity*, with her Understanding as well as her  
xv. Heart, as agreeable to the Natural Notions of the Supreme Being: And upon This, she esteemed it the Glory of the Gospel, that it was worthy of a Good God; Plain, Practical, and Useful. Nor did I ever observe Her to be better pleased, than when the Great Duties of it were preached, and inculcated, in their native Plainness and Simplicity.

It was by these found Notions of Almighty God, and his Will, that She was truly *Religious*, without any of the uneasy Mixtures of *Superstition*; and truly *Pious*, without any of the undue Heats of *Enthusiasm*. It was by these same Notions of God and his Providence, that She preserved her Soul in that Uncommon Composure, in all the Events, and under all the Evils of Life, which is very rarely seen. Such a Courage and Presence of Mind, in the many Attacks of Pain and Sickness which She experienced, (much greater than She would ever discover by any of her own Complaints;) such a Resignation, and such a Fortitude, beyond what may strictly be called Patience, under all that was laid upon Her, are seldom equalled, and never exceeded.

And as it was to these just Notions of God and his Perfections, that She owed her own  
*Christian*

*Christian* Conduct ; so it was by the same, SERM. that She was led, uniformly and constantly, to xv. be of the most favourable and charitable Dis- ~~W~~ position towards all Persons, in whom the Marks of Sincerity and Honesty appeared, amidst all their differing Sentiments concerning the Methods of worshiping and pleasing God. Those Divisions upon Religious Accounts, which She lamented, She thought might be covered with Charity ; but never could be cured by Violence and Oppression, without bringing in much greater Evils than such Methods could pretend to extirpate. And therefore, the Doctrine of Universal Love, and Mutual Forbearance, was That which She always expressed the greatest Pleasure to hear inforced upon Men's Minds ; and from which alone She expected any Remedy to the Evil Tempers and Passions of Men.

Of her compassionate Regard to the Outward Miseries of the Poor and distressed Part of the World, were I to speak only from my own Knowledge, This I could say, that I myself ever found Her disposed both to hear and to relieve ; and have myself known, in many Instances of Distress which have come before Her, very liberal Supplies, afforded with the Heart of a *cheerful Giver*. And I can appeal to many now living, who, I know, in many

S E R M. more Cases, (in which the Removal of Mi-  
xv. sery, or the procuring some Good to the  
Afflicted Part of Mankind, were concerned,) have received very large and very Noble Proofs of her Charitable Disposition, to be applied to those good Ends. But *They* will speak most feelingly, who themselves have partaken of it: *They* particularly, in these Parts, whose Families have been chiefly supported by her Bounty, whose Pains and Sickneses have been abated or removed by her Compassion, and Remedies; whose Children have been Clothed and Taught at her Expence; and whose repeated Wants have received Redress from her repeated Goodness: Whose Condition I was going now to lament; but I consider that *They* may still Promise Themselves the Continuance of the same Beneficence, and the same Supplies.

She had too great a Soul, and too comprehensive a Compass of Thought, not to judge well of the Public Interest of her Country; and not to think Herself too deeply concerned in it, to sit by an Unconcerned Spectator of its Condition. She understood, as well as any One, in what Point True Liberty was placed; between Licentiousness on one hand, and Tyranny on the other. She knew, as well as any One, the Value to be set upon such a Liberty,

berty; of being governed by Laws framed by s E R M. Consent; and not by Arbitrary Will. And xv. She was sensible, to the highest Degree, of ~~the~~ how great Consequence and Necessity the present Establishment was, to make so great a Happiness lasting to Us and our Posterity. I speak this to her Honour, as I think it none of the least Parts of her Character, that, with Respect to her *Country*, She was full of such Sentiments as naturally arise from an Extensive Love to the Happiness of Mankind; from a Benevolent Temper, and Good Disposition towards Posterity itself; and from a Tender Regard to the Good of Human Society. And Her Joy or Grief, her Pleasure or Uneasiness, were proportionable to these Sentiments; and such as shewed Them to be sincere. Nothing hardly was ever seen to give Her a more sensible Delight, than the Good Success of any thing which tended to establish so great an Happiness. Nothing hardly was ever seen to give Her a more sensible Pain, or to force from Her more Uneasy Expressions, than even the least Appearance of any thing which interrupted the Prospect, or tended to shake the Foundation, of Public Good.

Of her Uncommon Prudence in her Private Affairs, I need say the less, because her Name has been long known in this Part of

S E R M. the World, and celebrated with Honour upon  
xv. that Account. It pleased God, that She was  
left, almost at her first Appearance in the  
World, with the entire Management of a  
very great Estate; enough to try the Strength  
of any Head, and the Force of any Heart.  
But with what Applause to her Conduct, and  
with what Approbation of her Behaviour,  
She passed through Circumstances of so deli-  
cate a Nature; the World has been Witness:  
Whilst She acted like a Person disengaged from  
Herself; regardless of all the Amusements,  
and Pleasures that such a Fortune could Place  
in her Way; and centering all her Thoughts  
in *Another*, over whom She first watched with  
the Regards of the Tenderest Mother, and  
with whom She afterwards lived in the En-  
dearments of the most intimate Friendship;  
partaking in her Cares, and her Counsels, for  
the good of that Noble Young Family, who  
already Promise to the World all the Fruits  
that can be expected from so much Sollici-  
tude.

And here, indeed, the Part She acted was  
one almost Uninterrupted Scene of the most  
serious Concern, tempered with a Pleasing  
Affability, and a constant Good Humour,  
which made Her the Love of Those whose  
Improvement and Accomplishment She was  
making

making the Labour of her Life. Her End S E R M. was to lead them gently into the right Path ; xv. and to the willing Choice of that Virtue, which She knew would be their Great and only lasting Good. And it seemed, indeed, from her never ceasing Care, as if all her Happiness depended upon the Success of her Concern here. Her Words and Looks were Pleasure itself, when She spoke of the Improvements She at any Time saw in Those She so truly loved. And the Promises of Future Good, in the Virtuous Dispositions and great Endowments, which She perceived to answer, if not to go before, her Wishes, seemed to give Her a more touching Delight than all the World besides could afford Her.

But it did not please God to continue her Life to that \* Age to which many arrive ; and in which She might have hoped to see those Promises made good. She was seized with her last Illness, and called out of the World, at a Time when She might have found very peculiar Reasons to desire Life some few Years longer. But yet, far from imagining Herself the Judge of this, She never once indulged the Thought of Life, from the

\* She died in the Fifty Eighth Year of her Age, April 19, 1719.

S E R M. first Attack to the last Moment. In the midst  
xv. of all her Illness, which was of that Nature  
as sometimes to indispose Her, one would  
think, to such a Guard over Herself, Her  
Great and Constant Care was to render Her-  
self as little Uneasy to Others as possible; to  
appear Fearless, in order to cure the Fears of  
Those about Her; and to keep all the Signs  
of what She felt in Herself, from shewing  
Themselves to Those who, She knew, would  
have but too much to bear when the Stroke  
should come. Every Thing was Easy, Quiet,  
and Prepared within. She resigned Herself to  
(what, from the Beginning, She looked upon  
as certain) Death, with all that Composedness  
and Calmness which might accompany any  
ordinary Action of Life. And whilst She  
was all along persuaded of her own dying  
Condition, She watched over all her own  
Words: And suffered not any one Mark of  
that Persuasion to proceed from her, in the  
Presence of those who were most Dear to  
Her; nor any one Sign of Uneasiness, which  
might discompose Those, for whom, at  
Death, She retained the same True Tender-  
ness which She had ever demonstrated through  
her Life.

She is now removed from Us. She is at  
rest from the Labours of a Life, which, in the  
midst

midst of an Affluence of Riches, She experienced to be full enough of Cares within, and Pain and Affliction without. *She rests from her Labours: And her Works follow her.* Her Example remains to Those who are left behind her: And the Memory of her Excellencies, to Those who follow Her.

May Almighty God support Those, who are most nearly concerned, under so great a Loss! And may They, and We, all prepare Ourselves, by a Life of True Religion, and Universal Obedience to God's Laws, for a happy Death: That it may be said of Us, when that Hour shall come which must come, *Blessed are the Dead which Die in the Lord --- For They rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them!*

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## SERMON XVI.

Preached before the House of Lords at St. Peter's  
Westminster, on Jan. 30, 1720-21. being  
the Anniversary of the Martyrdom of K.  
CHARLES I.

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I COR. X. former Part of ver. 11.

*Now all these things happened unto Them for  
Ensamples.*

SER M.  
XVI.

---

**Y**OU will easily perceive, from my chusing these Words, as an Introduction to what I am now going to say, That it is my Design to make use of that Black and Unhappy Part of our *English History*, which we are commanded by Authority to call to mind on *this Day*, in such a manner, as to make such Observations upon it, and draw such Lessons from it, as may be of most Service to Ourselves, in order to prevent and avoid those *Evils*, which *happened unto* our Forefathers, *for Ensamples* to Us their Posterity: just as the Unhappinesses and Wickednesses of the *Jews* in former Ages, are here in the Text set

set before the Eyes of their Followers by St. S E R M.  
Paul.

XVI.

To open unnecessarily any old Wounds that are now closed up, and make them bleed afresh ; To widen any that are now open, and to inflame them still more and more : These Things are as far from my Inclination and Temper, as They are contrary to All that I know of Religion. I had much rather pour Oyl into Any that remain, and apply Nothing but soft and healing Medicines : Nay, if it were possible, I would cast a Veil over every Mark of past Infamy, or even Imperfection, on all Sides ; were it not for Fear, We might at the same Time lose some of the Best Lessons, and most Useful Observations, for our own Conduct.

To run with Violence against Any One Sort of Men now in being : To fix the Guilt of *That* upon All of one General Denomination, which All the Chief of them detested by a public Remonstrance at the Time of the Transaction : To lay *That* upon the *Generality* of a Nation, which even in the *First Zeal* against it, was declared by public <sup>a</sup> Authority to be the Work of a *Few*, at that Time possessed of Power : Or, to load with all possible Aggravations the unjustifiable Proceedings on *One*

<sup>a</sup> *Proclam.* King Charles II. 1660.

SE R M. Side only, and to clear the *Other* of every Thing  
xvi. that looks like Guilt : These are Points, which  
common Justice and Equity (not to mention  
Compassion and Charity) forbid Us to do.

But to teach Ourselves to avoid what we  
rightly blame in Others ; to take Care that  
True and Just Principles of Public Good do not  
suffer in the Esteem of Men, thro' the Mis-  
takes or Wickedness of Such as were Stran-  
gers to them, or only pretended to make use  
of them ; and that the Memory of *true Pa-*  
*triots* may not be cursed, for the Sake of the  
*Infamy of Usurpers* ruling by mere Power and  
Armed Force : To learn, from the Review of  
former Unhappinesses, every Thing that can be  
of Use to help Us in the Preventing Any the  
like Miseries for the Time to come, or the  
Curing any present Evils : *These*, and the like,  
are *Points* worthy of Persons concerned for the  
Good of their Country ; and Such, as may  
render this Fast, not a *Fast for Strife and De-*  
*bate*, nor merely a Fast for *Shame and Reproach* ;  
but a *Day of Useful Instruction*, in the Paths  
which lead to Public Peace, and the Esta-  
blishment of all that is valuable in human So-  
ciety.

The main Points which *this Day* recalls to  
our Minds, I shall connect together in the fol-  
lowing Manner, in order to introduce the Ob-

servations I design: — That there was, in the SERM. Days of our Forefathers, to which we now look back, a Zeal in the Representatives of *England*, in Parliament assembled, to oppose Every Arbitrary Encroachment upon the *Legal Liberties* and *Properties* of the Subject: — That, by Degrees, and by the Concurrence of many Accidents, the Passions, and Rage, and Revenge, of *Some*, by the Help of mutual *Provocations*, mixed themselves too much in the Contest: — That Ambitious, and Designing, and Desperate Men, took occasion from hence to set their own Machines on work: --- That the various and contradictory Schemes of *Belief* and *Worship*, embraced at that Time, (All equally honoured with the Name of *Religion*,) were called in, to heat the Imaginations of Men, and to help forward the common Ruine :--- That at length this ended in the Destruction of the *Legal Constitution*; in confounding even all Appearance of Freedom in what remained of a *Parliament*; in an *Usurped Power*, supported by *Force* against the Consent of the Nation, and with the Abhorrence of the greatest Friends to *Legal Liberty*; and in the *Murther* of the KING, against the Voices of *All*, but Such as then began to find themselves to have no Security but from an *Armed Force*. A Fact, which, as I truly detest; and am led to do so by all

S E R M. all the *Principles* I know any thing of: so, if  
xvi. any Words of mine could aggravate, consi-  
~~~~~dered in all its Circumstances, They never  
should be wanting. These are the Main Parts
of the History now before Us; upon which
I shall proceed to build some *Observations*.
And,

I. I shall take leave to Warn against One Use which may sometimes have been made of *this Part of our History*; and That is, The arguing from the Bad Event of Things, contrary to the Wishes and Designs of the Best and Wisest Men, against all such Opposition to *Illegal Encroachments*, and *Arbitrary Proceedings*, as first opened the Scene. For, As, in *Argument*, nothing is more *injudicious*, than to plead against *One thing*, because *Another thing* of a quite different Nature, succeeded to it, thro' the wicked Designs of some Men; and the unaccountable Concurrence of a thousand *Accidents*: So, in *Political Affairs*, nothing can be more *fatal*, than to draw a *Conclusion*, from such Events, which must lay the Foundation of Uninterrupted and Hopeless Slavery. The Nature and Reason of Things abhorr such an *Inference*: which would at once take away all the Right of a *Free Nation*; and make their Meeting together in *Parliament*, only

only a more Solemn Form of *Absolute Submission* ~~SE R M:~~
to whatever the *Will* of Another shall lay upon them. ~~xvi.~~ ~~~~~~~~~
All in the Administration of Government, who are *Wise*, would not wish to have such a Temptation to *Evil* laid in their Way: *All*, who are *Good*, would even oppose and prevent such a dangerous Piece of *Servile Subjection*: and *All*, who are *Bad* enough to wish for it, deserve, for that very Reason, to have the Terror of the *Contrary* before their Eyes; that so, what They will not refrain from for *Conscience*, yet for *Wrath's Sake* may be avoided. Let that Lesson, therefore, of *Good*, remain untouched, which under an *Administration*, by which the *Liberties* and *Laws* of the *Country* are preserved unviolated, can do no hurt; and under *One*, which assumes the Power of acting *without* or *against* Law, is of Absolute Necessity to prevent *Public Ruine*.

There is the less Occasion for *Argument* upon this Head, because the *Best* of *Those Historians*, and Other Writers, who have shewn the greatest Warmth against what followed, yet have been far from condemning those *Beginnings* of *Zeal* for the *Public*, which tended in their natural Consequences to the lasting Good of the *King* and the *Whole Body*; and could not have been diverted from attaining that End, but by the *Unreasonableness*, and

S E R M. private Views, of such on each Side, as had
xvi. nothing less at Heart than either the *Greatness*
of their *King*, or the *Good* of their *Country*:
Two Things, which in our Constitution are so
happily *joined together*, that They can never be
put asunder.

And what is still a Greater Consolation, is, that, tho' such *Lessons of Subjection* may have been taught by Persons of Leisure, little versed in the Affairs of Human Life, yet We have seen with Pleasure that All Sorts, and *Parties*, (if I must use that Word,) of Men amongst Us, have, (to their Honour be it spoken) in their several Turns, and as constantly as any Opportunity offered it self, openly and zealously made Opposition to Any Attempts, which They either knew, or imagined, to affect the known Laws and Liberties of their Country. Nay, it must be acknowledged, that *None* have shewn more of this Spirit *in Parliament*, than *Those* who have seemed fearful of giving too great Encouragement to *Liberty*, for fear of the ill Consequences of it: And it ought ever to be accounted one Part of their great Glory, that *out of Parliament*, in the greatest and happiest Struggle for *Public Liberty*, that the present Generation, or perhaps any other, ever was witness to, *Their Part* was great and remarkable, in opposing the Encroachments
of

of *Arbitrary Power*, and even in inviting an ~~ARMED~~ ^{ARMED} Force to make that Opposition successful: The only appearing Difference between ~~Them~~ ^{XVI.} ~~Them~~ and *Others*, if we may judge by *Practice*, being This, that, whilst They are Both equally jealous of Every supposed Attempt against their Liberties, the *One* sort may imagine *That* to be so, which the *Other* do not; and the *One* sort may be fearful lest the Defense of their own *Practice* should impress too great a Sense of *Liberty* upon the Minds of Men; whilst the *Other* may think it best not only to vindicate what is in it self praise-worthy, but to scatter the Light of *Legal Liberty* into all Corners of the Land, and to inspire the Love of it into the Heart of Every Subject.

If We, therefore, consider such Lessons of Submission with regard to the Practice of the Wisest and Best on *all Sides*; We may see how *Vain*, as well as how *Reproachful*, on All equally, they are: If we consider them in a *Political Light*; They present Us with nothing but Certain Slavery without any possible *Chance* for the contrary: If We consider them in the way of *Argument* merely; They are no better than *This*, That We ought not to do what is necessary for the Preservation of a Whole Nation, because it may happen that We may be ruined afterwards in another way; or, That a

S E R M. Man ought not to save himself from present
xvi. Imminent Death, because it is possible that in
the Struggle He may put himself into a *Fever*,
which may afterwards prove mortal ; Or,
That a *Good Thing* ought not to be attempted,
because a *Bad Thing* may possibly happen some
Time afterwards, which is neither the natural
Consequence of the *Former*, nor could be fore-
seen by the *Wiseſt* of Men. This leads us to
observe,

II. The Unreasonableſness of casting the
Reproach of this Day's Fact, and of every
Thing before and after it, upon the Principles
of *True Liberty*, in general ; and upon the
Defenders of them : Whereas it will appear,
upon a serious Consideration, (however it may
ſound at first hearing,) That, of *all* Men,
These are led by their *Principles*, if they un-
derſtand them, to an utter and ſettled Disap-
probation of what They have the Reproach of
favouring. For, what is the *Liberty* contend-
ed for, by all Men of Honesty, and Under-
ſtanding ? Not Licentiousneſs : Not a Right
to overturn *Laws* and *Constitutions*, whenever
Paſſion or Rage dictate ; and the favourable
Opportunity of *Power* offers it ſelf : Much
leſs, a *Licence*, under Pretenſe of *Liberty*, to
deſtroy all Freedom in Parliament ; to ſet up
an

an Arbitrary Power, and maintain it by Force S E R M.
of Arms. Nothing of all this; but every
thing contrary to it. It is the *Liberty* which
results from being governed by *Laws*, made by
Consent; the *Liberty* which results from these
Laws being settled in such a manner, that the
Innocent shall always know their own Defense
from Injuries, and even the most *Guilty* know
before-hand upon what their *Guilt* shall be
founded: It is the secure Enjoyment of *Prop-
erty*, and *Privileges*, granted by *Laws*, free
from every thing that looks like Violence.

The *End* of these *Laws* is to guard against
the worst of all worldly Evils, *Arbitrary Pow-
er*, in whatsoever Shapes or Degrees it may
pretend to shew it self, and upon whatsoever
Pretext it may found such *Pretensions*; to pre-
serve Judgment and Justice from the Influences
of Passion, and Private Resentment; and Pu-
nishment it self, in the Case even of the meanest
Subjects, from becoming Cruelty. A Scheme
of Happiness, not known in the Nations round
about Us, either under *Absolute Monarchies*,
or *Republics*; depending, one would judge
from hence, entirely upon the Nature of that
Mixt Form under which We live.

But what was the Case now before Us? We
find plainly that a *Fact*, as shocking in it self,
as it was opposite to the Temper of *English-*

SERM. men, and contrary to the Maxims of the English Government, could not be so much as attempted, till the Freedom of Parliament was totally destroyed ; the Balances which keep our Government in an even Situation, torn asunder ; and an Armed Force made the Support of what remained of Civil Government.

This Proceeding is much more agreeable to the Maxims of Those who think and teach (if any such still remain) that *Arbitrary Power* is the best and fittest for the Government of Mankind ; than to the Sentiments of Others of a contrary Judgment. For in this Case, All of *Legislation*, as well as of *Government*, that remained, was influenced and supported by mere *Force*, which is always *Absolute*. Nay, the Crime and Evil of *Usurpation* it self, upon their own *Scheme*, is so qualified in process of Time, that *Prescription* or *Possession*, maintained for a Term of Years, relieves Them at length of very much of their *First Abhorrence* of it. Whereas, No Length of Time, No Tenure of *Prescription*, can reconcile the Minds of Those who understand what *Legal Liberty* is, to the total Destruction of a *Legal Constitution*, and to the Settlement of mere Power. The very Thing which, at the End of some Years, would have comforted Others, if a long Possession of Arbitrary Power had continued amongst

mongst Us, seems to Them so big with *Public SERM.* Misery, and Calamity, that it heightens and inflames their Detestation of all Proceedings which were thought necessary to such an Evil: an Evil, which, if one Cunning and Daring *Usurper* had been succeeded by *Another*, might probably have cleaved to Us, and our Seed for ever; and have come at length to have been the Subject of Fulsome *Panegyric* to All the Admirers of Uncontrollable Power; and left to be lamented *in private* only by Such as *Those*, whose *Principles* are sometimes reproached as if They favoured what is absolutely inconsistent with them. This leads Us,

III. To observe the perfect *Consistency* which there is between a well-grounded Disapprobation of that Scene of Things, which We this Day lament; and a settled and hearty Approbation of that *Great Transaction* in our own Days, upon which the present Establishment of our *Constitution* is founded. There may be *Those*, who are so little used to consider a Cause thoroughly, and to pursue it thro' all its Consequences, that They may be surprized to hear a thing so distant from what they have been used to. But yet it will be found certainly true, that *These two* Things are so far from being *Inconsistent*; that the very Same *Principles* which lead Men of Consideration to

S E R M. Approve the *Latter*, Direct and Influence Them
xvi. to Disapprove the *Former*. For Instance, The
Maxim, that there is in the Whole Nation a Right to preserve Themselves and their *Constitution of Government*, from Ruine, is so far from implying in it, that a *Particular Party* of a Nation has a Right to possess itself of the *Governing Power* by *Force*, or *Trick*; or to tear in Pieces a *Legal Constitution*; or to commit Acts of Violence against Every Branch of that *Constitution*, as well as against *Private Men*: *It is so far*, I say, from implying these things, that it strongly implies, and inforces the Contrary. As therefore, in the *One Case*, there was the Concurrence of All Ranks, and All the Differing Sorts, amongst Us, *against* all the *Armed Force* in the Land, contending whose Cries and Calls should be loudest for Relief; and in the *Other*, the Conjunction of a *Few*, secured only by their having all the *Armed Force*, then in being, on their Side: As, on the *One* hand, the Concurrence of the *Whole* was directly and truly designed for the Preservation of our *Legal Constitution*; and, on the *Other* hand, the Views of particular Men were to be carried on by the *Destruction* of that *Constitution*, and the extinguishing all Freedom of *Parliament*: As the *One* ended in the antient Form of *Legal Government*, and a stronger Establish-

Establishment of the *Rights of Subjects, and of Parliaments*; and the *Other* in a direct Avowal of *Arbitrary Power*, where any of the Legal Rights or Privileges, belonging to *Parliament or People*, stood in the Way: As there are These, and the like, *Essential*, and Irreconcileable Differences between the *One* and the *Other*; (too many to be now enumerated;) it is evident that the *Proceedings of the Whole Nation*, in the *One Case*, stand approved and supported by the *same Principles*, which lead most effectually to the Condemnation of the *Proceedings of a Part possessed of Power*, in the *Other Case.* But,

IV. As *these Things happened to our Forefathers for Examples*; so let Them be *Examples to Us*, not only to chuse what was *Good* in the *Conduct of Some*, but to avoid what was *Evil* in *Others*, and what indeed hindred all the *Good* which was proposed. The *Great Lesson* is, that on all Sides Men suffer not their Personal Resentments, Passions, Disappointments, or Private Interests, to enter into their Contests, where the Public is concerned: At least, Let them guard against their Influences, as much as it is possible for Human Nature to do. I say, *As much as possible*, well knowing how hard a Lesson this is, and how seldom the Practice

SE R M. Practice of it is to be hoped for. There is
xvi. something in *Self-Love* so deeply rooted, that
~ ~ ~ Private Interests and Private Views have often
a silent and effectual Influence upon Men,
even when their Movements are not distinctly
felt within. Nor would I be understood to in-
sinuate, that it is always impossible that *These*
should happen to fall in with what is truly for
the *Public Good*. But this is by Accident: and
it being really the Satisfaction of our *Passions*,
which gives *Life* to all Proceedings in which
These mix themselves, the *Experiment* upon
this Account, is always dangerous. For the
Nature and Operation of These Principles is
such, that They will obscure or discolour the
brightest *Object*: They will make *That* appear
reasonable, which is *profitable*, or agreeable to
some Present View; and throw a Disgrace up-
on whatever does not tend to satisfy Them-
selves. Take away *These*; and *Public Good*
appears naked and open to every Eye, free
from all Difficulties and Embarrassments: But
let *These* enter in their full Strength; and *Pub-
lic Good* becomes only *Another Word* for our
own *Private Views* and *Passions*. But of All
Principles of Action in Human Nature, *Re-
venge* for Personal Injuries is seen to make the
greatest Havock in all Public Disputes and Dis-
orders. For, as it is naturally *blind* against
all

all Light, and *Deaf* to all Argument; so, it ~~SERM.~~ can be Sated by nothing but some one particular XV. *Sacrifice* which it proposes; after which is compassed, it generally ends in Shame and Repentance. The Power of these Principles is known to be so great in Civil Affairs, that one main Foundation of all *Civil Government*, is, That Men ought not to be the Avengers of their own Personal Injuries; And this Fundamental Maxim of *Society* is sacredly observed through the Whole Tenor of our *English Laws*: and never transgressed or neglected, but upon Extraordinary Occasions.

How terrible was the Force of *These* seen to be in the Days of our *Fathers*; Especially, when they were set on Fire by that *mistaken Zeal*, (the true and genuine *Enthusiasm*,) which at once *inflames* and *consecrates* the *Passions*; at once actuates them into *Rage* to all Extremities, and sanctifies that *Rage* by the sacred Names of *God* and *Religion*: By which it came to pass, that the Cause of every heated Imagination became the Cause of *God*; that whatever Men thought well of, in Religious Affairs, for Themselves, They came to think it their Duty to force upon others; and that *Mutual Toleration* was declared by *Some*, who once wanted it themselves, the *Greatest* of all the

We have much to learn from these Things ; and much to avoid. Let us imitate all that Zeal of our *Forefathers* for our *Legal Constitution*, which was visibly designed, and naturally tended, to prevent future Encroachments of Power, either *against*, or *without*, Law : And let us fly far from all those *Methods* which naturally paved the Way to the *Loss* of all that *Freedom* which they pretended to secure. Let us value our Liberties, as Honest Men : Not only for the Pleasure and Security They afford to Ourselves ; but as a *Trust* reposed in Us for our *Posterity*, much more *Sacred* and *Important* than Any other Legacy of this World, that we can leave them. Let not our *Passions* be our first Instructors in any Step of our *Public Conduct* : But let them Themselves be instructed and guided by our *Reason*. Let our *Love* to what we justly approve, and chuse for Ourselves in *Religion*, engage Us to such Charity and Forbearance towards *Others*, as may demonstrate our Gratitude for our own Happiness ; and our deep Sense that Whatsoever we may account the *Cause of God* is to be promoted by None but the *Methods of God*.

In a word, As *Britons*, enjoying the Blessings of a *Constitution* unknown to all the Countries

tries around Us, even where the Word *Liberty* ^{S E R M.} is still used ; and, As *Christians*, enjoying the ^{XVI.} Light and Liberty of the *Gospel*; Let us secure, as much as can be, the Repose and Comforts of this present Life, by valuing and preserving that *Form of Government* which administers so much Good to Us ; and let Us press, with unwearyed Steps, to the Rewards of the *Life which is to come*, (free from all the Vicissitudes, and Confusions, of the happiest Kingdoms of this World) by *walking worthy of our Holy Vocation*, and adorning our Profession by a truly *Christian* and unblameable Conversation.

*Which GOD grant, for the Sake of Jesus Christ
our Lord, &c.*

Of Christian Moderation.

S E R M O N XVII.

Preached at St. Swithin's Church, on
Jan. 30, 1702-3.

PHILIPP. IV. 5.

Let your Moderation be known unto all Men.

S E R M.

XVII.

~ ~

THE Word which is here translated *Moderation*, signifies an Easiness and Gentleness of Mind, disposing Men, not only to be contented and quiet themselves, but to be pliable and yielding to Those around them, in order to the general Good; a Temper always ready, by all reasonable Methods, to promote and establish the Happiness of Themselves, and of the World about them. This Temper, we see, St. Paul doth most heartily recommend to *Christians*, nay, he desires it may be One of the more conspicuous and visible Parts of their Character; a Mark, as it were, to distinguish them from the World of ill-natured and inflexible

flexible Men; and to make a Difference be-^{SERM.}
tween Them, and the other Part of Mankind, ^{XVII.}
who are not to be moved by any Consider-
ations, to yeild or bend to any Terms of
Love and Peace. And yet, notwithstanding
this, how little of this excellent Virtue do
we see in the World? And what little Hopes
have we of seeing more of it? Many Men take
the Word into their Mouths, and use it as they
see fit: *Some*, to ridicule, and make a Jest of it;
Some, to put it, as a false Colouring to Some-
thing bad underneath: And Many mistake
Something Else for it; and whilst they think
they are possessed of it, are far removed from
it. There seem to be Few, who have that
Charity that is necessary to the very being of it;
and for want of this, Many can neither under-
stand, nor heartily seek after it. And yet, from
the want of this Virtue have proceeded very
many of those Miseries Men have felt in their
own Minds; the Plagues of Impatience, Ma-
lice, and Revenge; and almost all the Unhap-
pinesses and Ruines that have befallen *public Societies*. Why then should not Men be will-
ing, if they have any Sense left of their own
private *Quiet*; if they have any Regard to the
Happiness of their Neighbours; if they be
touched with any Concern for the Good of that
Society they belong to; nay, if they but con-
sider

S E R M. sider the Share they may have, and their Pos-
xvii. terity, in the Mischiefs and Disturbances that
shall befall it; why should not Men, I say, if
any such Considerations are worthy their No-
tice, (as certainly they are;) be ready to un-
derstand what this Virtue is, and to practise it?
and be sollicitous to know, (by their own Ex-
perience) what are the Properties and the
blessed Fruits of it; And, since the great
Apostle so particularly recommends it, why
should they not (far from being ashamed of it,)
glory in letting their *Moderation be known unto
all Men?*

And this Subject I purposely now chuse,
because I am persuaded it is most proper for
the sad Occasion of this Day, which I judge to
be observed most according to the Design of it,
when such material Points are insisted on, as,
if they had been heartily embraced, would
have prevented the Effects of that violent Spi-
rit, the Characters of which it now bears;
and will prevent all Like Evils, and mutual
Outrages, for the future, if sincerely embraced
on all hands.

What I design at present upon this Subject,
shall be comprized under these three Heads:

I. I shall endeavour to shew what *Christian*
Moderation is, by pointing out some of the
chief

chief Properties of it, and of the Vice opposed to it.

S E R M.

XVII.



II. I shall propose some proper Arguments to move us to pursue after it, and to possess Ourselves of it.

III. I shall endeavour to lay down some Rules for the attaining it.

First, I say, I shall endeavour to shew what *Christian Moderation* includes in it, by pointing out some of the chief Properties of it, and of the Vice contrary to it, *viz. Violence*. I shall mention but two or three.

I. *Christian Moderation* will dispose us to be always ready to hear whatsoever can be reasonably offered, for the making up the Differences, and reconciling the Quarrels and Dissensions, amongst Men. It is a Virtue composed of Charity, Humility, and Peaceableness; and therefore must lead to the blessed Fruits of those Graces: and, upon the same account, it is utterly inconsistent with a Mind averse to Overtures of Peace; indisposed to hear of Union and Temper, where there have once been Differences; and resolved against Compliance, and an healing Disposition, where once there have been Breaches, and Provocations. This, indeed, is the Temper of Violence and Passion, which

S E R M. cannot be conceived to enter into any Breast, XVII. without the Mixture of Pride, and Prejudice, and ~~and~~ Revenge ; or else without the Leaven of some private Design, which too often is the Case. But, to be more particular ; In order to Peace and Union,

2. *Christian Moderation* will dispose Men not to be too hard upon their Brethren of different Parties, or different Denominations ; not to aggravate their Faults beyond due Measure ; not to be ever incensing and inflaming them, by the Repetition, and lively Representation, of them, in what Colours they think fit ; and this, not in order to make them themselves sensible of the Guilt of them, but to make them odious to the World, and hateful to all about them ; the Mischief and Wickedness of which we easily see in Others, tho' we too easily overlook it in Ourselves.

Christian Moderation forbids not that Men should be very fully satisfied with the Cause which they themselves espouse ; or the Way they chuse themselves to walk in : but it forbids them to be ever railing at Others ; to be always cloathing the Mistakes and Failings of Others in the worst Circumstances they can invent ; or, to manage their own Cause so as to irritate, and not convince, those that oppose it, or do not fall in with it. It forbids

bids us not to have a due Sense of any Crimes or ~~SE~~ R.M. Errors committed, or embraced; by Others, or **xvii.** to do our utmost to convince them in a Way ~~W~~ proper for us to take; and likely to have Effect upon them: But it forbids us to lay them open, after such a Manner, as tends to raise their Passions, and utterly indispose them to hear and receive what can be offered. It forbids us to charge All, of any Sort, with the Crimes of a Few: for that is fixing Crimes upon Those, who are not guilty of them. This is not the Way of Charity and Condescension; this is not the Road to any tolerable degree of Harmony and Quiet in the World; and is teaching Others but a bad Lesson against Ourselves. And where is the Good, and what will be the Issue, when the great Business going forward in a Nation, is a Contest between the differing Parts that make it up, who shall find most Faults in the other; and aggravate them with the greatest Spleen and Keeness; and paint them out in the worst and blackest Colours They can find? or, who shall represent their Brethren so as most effectually to vex and anger *Them* Themselves, as well as to set the World on Fire against them: I say what good Issue can there be of this, unless the good of a People consists in mutual Hatred, and a Readiness to destroy one another? And yet how many Men think it almost their

SER M. Duty to say any thing of Persons of differing
XVII. Notions, and differing Measures, from them-
selves? How many Men, who are not contented with being in what They judge to be a good Way themselves, with the Advantages of Truth and Right on their own Side; not without such a due Sense of the Mistakes and Faults of others, as may inspire Them with a Desire to reclaim and amend them; but think their Business is to irritate and expose them, as far as possible; and imagine, that they cannot be just to their own Cause, without being unjust to that of others; nay, that no one is truly and heartily in their Way of thinking, as to the main Object of their Zeal, who doth not join in the reviling, abusing, and unchristian Treatment, of all who think otherwise? This is visible in many of all Parties, and all Sects, throughout the World; and yet this is as certainly contrary to *Christian Moderation*, as it is to all Hopes of Peace in the World. For if *Christian Moderation* be a yielding and pliable Disposition of Mind, then it certainly tends to the uniting the Differences of Men: And if it does, whatever is wholly contrary to That, whatever lays the Foundation of eternal Variance, is contrary to it, and inconsistent with it.

But, once more, *Thirdly*, *Christian Moderation* will dispose us to yield up Things of little Importance,

Importance, and small Concern, for the sake S E R M. of a greater Union, and a more strong Foundation for lasting Happiness and Peace amongst Men: much more, will it dispose Men to amend and reform what may be made better, for the same Ends. To be heartily concerned for the Substantials and Fundamentals of Religion; for Things of great Importance either to Church or State; for what is of Moment in the Worship of God, or the Government of Christian People, is that which all are obliged to. Nor doth *Christian Moderation* lay the least Obligation upon Us to yield in these Points. But when these are secured; and when, without any Prejudice to these, something may be granted, something may be altered or amended; or added: and this, either good in itself, or, at least, not at all blameable, and highly advantageous to the Interest and Peace of the World about us, and very much conduced to a strong Union, and a lasting good Correspondence amongst *Christians*; --- Not to be ready to yield in such Cases; not to be disposed to comply in such Matters, seems directly contrary to any Desire of Peace and Concord; and therefore must be contrary to *Christian Moderation*. For what Reason can there be against it? Will it do us any Prejudice to have a larger ground for Union? Is it not a Christian Disposition

SERM. sometimes to yeild even to the unreasonable Humour of Others, and, by somewhat which will do Ourselves no Prejudice, to consult the Good and promote the Agreement of *Christians*? Or is it too great a Condescension, and too noble an Instance of Humility, to be more willing to agree than Others are, and to comply, as far as is reasonable with Them, who will not comply, so far as we think reasonable, with Us? Which of the two is it, that it becomes *Christians* to contend for; Who shall stand most upon their Guard against Union, or who shall step first towards it? Who shall insist most stiffly upon little Punctilioes, of none or very small Concern to the main of Religion; or who shall be most disposed to part with things of that Nature, for the sake of what God and their common Saviour love infinitely better? And which of the two sorts of Men will come off at the great Day of Accounts with greater Glory, *They*, who have preferred the Union of the Christian World before their own Humour, or Opinions of little Importance; or *They*, who have stiffly insisted, and refused to yield up the least or most indifferent Circumstance to that Consideration?

But I shall not enlarge on this any more, nor search out any more Particulars at present, of Christian Moderation. But only observe, from what

what has been said, how unjust and unreasonable that Account is, which is given by many, of this Virtue ; by Those only, I mean, who are such Strangers to it themselves, that they cannot bear the least Pretense to it in Others ; who would make the World believe, that it proceeds from an Indifference to all Religion, and from a Mind very lukewarm in its Zeal for God : when, in truth, *Christian Moderation* proceeds from a great Zeal for all that deserves it, and a hearty Concern for the Honour of God. Let them, therefore, answer for it to God, and their own Consciences, whoever presume to bring a Disgrace and Contempt upon this Virtue, and those that endeavour to practise it. A moderate Man, who is truly so, values every thing as it deserves, and no farther. And as St. James says, that the Wisdom from Above is first *pure*, and then *peaceable* ; so, next to his own *Purity*, he has a sacred regard to the Happiness and *Peace* of the World about him. And I see no Reason he has to be ashamed of the Name ; or to envy any others a contrary Character.

But I pass on now to the *Second* thing I proposed, viz. to mention some proper Arguments to move us heartily to pursue after it, and to possess ourselves of it; For Instance ;

S E R M. *First*, If we consider the Peace and Quiet this
xvii. Virtue includes in it, I mean with respect to
the Breast of every private Man, this will in-
flame us with some Desire to attain it. Com-
pare the Man who is possessed of it, with one
that is void of it; the Man who has a Mind
ever ready to hear of Peace and Unity, Agree-
ment and Harmony, with the Man who is
never in Humour to attend to any thing but
what tends to the widening and opening of
Wounds and Breaches; the Man who is ever
willing to make Allowances for the Mistakes
and Faults of Men of different Opinions from
himself, with the Man who is always raking in-
to them, and always eager to represent them
in the most inflaming Manner; the Man who
is ready to yield up a Thing of little Moment,
and many an inconsiderable Point, to obtain
Peace, and settle a good Correspondence amongst
the several Members of the same Body, with
the Man who knows no such thing as Yielding
or Compliance, but is rather ready to sacri-
fice the Universal Peace to his own private Fan-
cies: Compare these two together, and con-
sider in whose Breast most Quiet and Satisfaction
is to be found; and it will be no very difficult
Matter to determine, whether more Serenity and
Happiness of Mind follow upon a Disposi-
tion inclined to Concord and Unity, than upon
a Mind

a Mind always upon the Rack how to inflame S E R M. and heighten Differences ; or, always eager XVII. to take all Measures which are effectual to ~~the~~ the keeping up Variances and Animosities in the World.

But, *Secondly*, As this Temper of Mind implies Quiet and Happiness in itself, so it is the most ready, and, I may say, the only Temper, that can, and must at last, heal the evil Dispositions of Mankind ; and produce Peace and Happiness in public Societies : which is, I am sure, a good Argument, why every single Person should think himself obliged to pursue after it. In vain are other Methods thought of, and made use of, to join the Hands of Men in Friendship, unless their Hearts be disposed to this candid and compliant Temper. There will always be passionate and wicked Men in the World, to foment the Differences in it. And if none in it will yield one Step ; if none will ever bend and comply ; what can be hoped for ? If the Method taken on all sides be to rail and revile, to aggravate and misrepresent, to search out Faults, and then to make what they please of them ; this rather looks like a Declaration of perpetual War against one another, and is, in effect, a solemn Protestation, that they neither hope for, nor desire, Reconciliation and Peace ; and seems to be a firm Resolution of destroying and

S E R M. and ruining one another, whenever an Opportunity offers itself. And what a blessed Aspect upon the public Happiness have such Resolutions as these? It may be safely affirmed, that the Men of such Tempers, and such Dispositions, are They, who have, in all Ages, disturbed the Quiet of the World, ruined the Happiness of Societies, and who are ever hindering all Hopes of a better State for the future.

But see if another Scene might not be reasonably hoped for, and That, a Scene of Happiness to the Public, would Men but be persuaded to be as moderate, as yielding, as compliant, as good-natured, as ready to make Allowances, as willing to study the public Advantage (which is public Peace and Agreement,) as the Christian Religion obliges them to be. Would not this be visible in its beneficent Influences upon the whole Society? At least, would not this dispose us to live as *Christians* ought to do with *Christians*; and with all Members of the same Civil Society? But enough of *this*. --- I shall mention but one Argument more to move us to endeavour after this Christian Frame of Mind; and that is,

Thirdly, That it is a divine and god-like Temper, an Imitation of God himself, in what ought to

to appear the most amiable Part of his Character ~~S E R M.~~ in our own Eyes. He never has shewn himself ~~xvii.~~ willing to aggravate our Faults beyond the ~~~~~~~ Hope of Pardon ; or indisposed to come to Terms of Accommodation and Peace with his Sinful Creatures. He desires to be united to *Us* in Love and Friendship, who are at a greater Distance from Him by far, than Those who differ the most from us, can possibly be. He is willing to recede from the strictest Right, and the Rigour of Justice, in order to Our Happiness. And shall not we be willing, and disposed, after so divine a Copy, to yield and bend, in order to meet our Brethren in any Design, that tends to the Foundation or Establishment of a thing of such vast Importance as universal Peace and Happiness ? Almighty God himself shews us, in the most surprizing Instance of our Redemption, how much he values the Happiness of his Creatures. It is our Duty to imitate him ; and do every thing in our Power for the compassing the same End : and especially to imitate *Him*, in what he accounts One of his greatest Glories.

I come now to the *Third* thing proposed at first, *i. e.* To lay down some Rules, in order to our obtaining this Christian Temper of Mind.

SERM. 1. Let us often consider such Arguments, to move us to the Pursuit after it, as I have before mentioned : How easy, and sedate, and happy, it will make us in the inward State, and the secret Recesses, of our own Minds ; how beneficial it will be in its Influences upon the Public ; how many Miseries it might have prevented ; how many Happinesses it would procure, were it universally practised. Let us then consider of how bad Consequence, and of what wretched Influence the Temper contrary to it must necessarily be, upon Society ; what Wrath and Anger, what Malice and Ill-will ; what Outrages, and Tumults, and Wars, and Massacres, it has been, and ever will be, the Occasion of ; A deep Sense of these, and of the great Duty of imitating God in our Tempers and Practice, will help us in the obtaining and possessing this divine Virtue. And

2. In order to this, it is absolutely necessary that we should free ourselves from Hatred and Malice, Pride and Arrogance. Love and Humility are the proper Road to this Virtue ; but Uncharitableness and Pride lead us into Paths quite distinct from, and opposite to it. For the more we love our Neighbour, the more ready shall we be to design and promote his Happiness ; and the more desirous and studious we are of that, the more shall we be willing to yield

yield all lesser Points up to it ; to comply in any S E R M. thing of no great Importance, when that demands it. And then, the more humble we are, u u the less Opinion and Value we set upon Ourselves ; the less shall we be sensible of any under-valuing of ourselves by Compliance and Yielding ; the more ready shall we be to submit to all good Offices ; to recede from what we might, perhaps, in Justice, claim, and to shew a Pattern to all about us, of Moderation and Condescension. But, on the other side, if we have conceived, or do nourish, any Prejudices against Mens Persons ; if we hate and abhor Men, because they do not fall in with us in all things ; or entertain any sort of Ill-will against them ; this will make us glad to displease and incense them, to heighten their Prejudices already embraced, but is never likely to make us consult their Good at any Time, or prefer it before the least Advantage, or most insignificant Humour, of our own ; or to make us sollicitous in our Endeavours after a Frame of Mind, which consists in a Readiness to yield and comply, for the sake of our common Good and Happiness.

And therefore, if our Breasts be filled with Pride, with an overweening Conceit of Ourselves, of our own Abilities, and our own Way ; if we be too arrogant to hear of any Alteration in Ourselves ; if we think it beneath our Dignity to stoop

S E R M. stoop or descend, or to recede from any thing, xvii. tho' of never so little Consequence; we may ~~~~~~~ e'en put a stop to our Endeavours after a Virtue which will dwell only with a Man of an humble and yielding Spirit; and fit down contented with our own great Acquirements, and not think any more of a Temper, which cannot possibly reside in a Breast, where Pride and Arrogance are nourished.

3. It is absolutely necessary, also, that we free our Breasts from Covetousness; Ambition; and All such Designs, as terminate in our own private Profit or Honour. For Moderation, in a truly Christian Sense, (however the Word found in *English*,) is a public-spirited and noble Virtue; and can never be completely and consistently exercised by a Man, who has proposed to himself his own private Gain, or Advance-
ment, for the End of his Labours. How can He be ready and willing to recede one step from his own Interest, in order to the universal Good of Others, who has fixed his Eye only upon himself; and thinks *That* only to be good, which is a present Profit or Honour to himself? How confined must his Desires and his Designs be; and how little must *He* be moved with a Sense of any Advantage to others, who has not left any room for such Considerations to come at him, but is wholly wrapt up in himself, and his own

own Bye-ends? We can never hope to have ~~S E R M.~~
our *Moderation*, our yielding and easy Temper, xvii.
be known unto all Men; nay, we can never hope ~~to~~
to have any thing to do with it, 'till we have
banished all private Ends out of our Hearts;
at least 'till we have brought them all entirely
into Subjection to a greater End; and have
such a Command over Ourselves, as that we
can make them yield, at any time, to more
weighty and generous Considerations.

These Rules will help us, if we are sincere
in the use of them, to form Ourselves into this
god-like Temper of Mind; and then to pro-
ceed and improve in it, notwithstanding all
the Opposition of the violent Part of the
World.

To conclude with one word proper on this
Occasion; Had the Men of this Nation been
universally sensible of the Nature and Obli-
gation of this Duty, and possessed it in a-
ny Degree; the wicked Violences, and Evils,
of *this* Day, and many both *before*, and af-
ter it, had not now been called to our Re-
membrance. I will not enumerate them;
but rather pray, that the Records of Them,
in our Histories, may make us, on all fides,
more in love with true Christian Modera-
tion: without which (I will be bold to say)
we can never (in Time to come) be secure a-
gainst

S E R M. gainst the like deplorable Calamities ; nor
xvii. transmit those inestimable Blessings of Religious
and Civil Liberty, we at present enjoy, (under the wise Government of Those who appear to know the Value of this Virtue) safe, and unviolated, to future Times : And this, I am sure, ought to be the hearty Endeavour of every *Protestant Englishman*, of what Denomination soever.

SERMON XVIII.

Preached at St. Swithin's Church, on Sept. 2,
1702, being the Fast-day observed in Re-
membrance of the Fire of *London*, 1666.

LUKE XIX. 41, 42.

And when he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy Day, the Things that belong unto thy Peace ! But now they are hid from thine Eyes.

THE City our blessed Lord thus wept over, was *Jerusalem*; esteemed, by the Jews, as the Glory of the whole Earth. But he wept not over it, as a Collection of fine Buildings; but as it was the Capital City, and principal Resort, of the whole Jewish Nation; as it contained in it a vast Number of that People whom God had chosen out of the World to be his own: an ungrateful and rebellious People, that had had all Me-

SERM. thods tried with them, to make them better
xviii. and happier, but could not be reclaimed by
any; that had killed and stoned the Prophets
God had sent to them, and now were going
to reject and kill his Son; and so were desti-
ned, through their own Wickedness, to a great
and remarkable Ruine and Destruction. The
Thought and Foresight of this moved the
Compassion of our Lord, who came to save
them. *When he was near, He beheld the City;*
and that View brought to his Mind those dis-
mal Calamities the Inhabitants of it were calling
down upon themselves: And *he wept over it*,
expressing his tender Regard to it's Inhabi-
tants in this Wish, *If thou hadst known, even thou,*
in this thy Day, i. e. if, in this your last Tri-
al, now at this Time when I am sent to You
with the last Offers of God's Mercy, *the Things*
that belong to thy Peace! If You, the Inhabi-
tants, had understood what is your true and
real Interest, your Duty and your Happiness!
But now they are hid from thine Eyes, i. e. from
this Time, If You, the People highly fa-
voured of God, are resolved to persist in Infi-
delity, and even to reject Me your long-ex-
pected Messiah, whom God has sent to you,
with his last Offers; there can be no more
Hopes. God Almighty most justly now
gives you over, to be led by that perverse

Spirit into Ruine and Destruction. And ~~S E R M.~~ this same thing our blessed Lord sets forth ~~XVIII.~~ in another Place, in the Parable of the Householder, who planted a Vineyard, and let it out to Husbandmen, and sent several Servants to receive the Fruits of it for him; and, after they had been Abused and Murthered, last of all sent his Son: and when they refused Obedience to this last and worthiest Messenger, he could send, He resolves to try them no more, but miserably to destroy those wicked Men.

From this Case of the Nation of the *Jews*, and the City of *Jerusalem*, we are naturally led to observe these *Three* things:

I. That, according to the constant Representations of the Holy Scriptures, there is a Day appointed for wicked Societies and Nations, 'till which Time Almighty God waits for their Repentance, and defers their utter Ruine; but beyond which, they shall not be tried.

II. That this is not fixed by Arbitrary Will and Pleasure, but upon just Reasons: Or, in other Words, That there is not a Day for the utter Ruine of any Nation, or Society, so determined by God, but that, if they repent, and

S E R M. amend their Lives, before that Day comes, xviii. they shall certainly be pardoned and blessed.
~~~ And, agreeably to this,

III. That before the final Destruction of any Societies, or Nations, God uses many and sufficient Means of reforming and amending them ; that they may go on to flourish and prosper in the World.

I. We may observe, that there is a Day appointed for Wicked Societies and Nations, 'till which Almighty God waits for their Repentance, but beyond which their utter Ruine shall not be deferred.

Thus, We see, in the Passage of the Gospel now before Us, there was a Time beyond which *Jerusalem*, and the whole Nation of the *Jews*, were not to be tried ; and no more Offers of Mercy were to be tendered to them ; but if they did not, at the Coming of the Son of God, repent, and turn from their Evil Ways ; they were, from that Instant, devoted to Misery and Ruine : Or, if They did not, in *this their Day*, *know and practise the Things that belonged to their Peace*, *They would from that Time be bid from their Eyes.*

Thus.

Thus it was with the First World; when ~~SER M.~~ their Sins were many and heinous, and the xviii. whole Earth was corrupt, *My Spirit*, says ~~the~~ *God, shall not always strive with Man*; I will not ever wait for their Repentance and Amendment; but their Days shall be an Hundred and Twenty Years. (*Gen. vi. 3.*) So long, and no longer, the Men of that World were to be waited on; and then a Flood of Waters to be brought in upon them, if they continued ungodly. Thus we see, tho' the Posterity of *Abraham* were by Promise to possess the Land of the *Amorites*, yet it was not to be, *till the Iniquity of the Amorites was full* (*Gen. xv. 16.*) 'till they had been tried to the utmost, and were found to be fit for nothing but a signal Destruction. Now these Things that were written before, were written for our Instruction, and these Things happened unto them for Examples. And we may argue, that, as there was a Pitch of Wickedness, beyond which God would not let these Societies of Men go on, without a remarkable Vengeance; and as there was a Day certainly set, beyond which they should not be tried, and after which no farther Offers should be made for their Reformation and Happiness: so it is with Us Ourselves, with this Nation and People to which we belong; So certainly, there is a determinate

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S E R M. Height of Wickedness, beyond which God  
XVIII. will not bear with us; and a Day, in the  
W<sup>W</sup> Purpose of Almighty God, beyond which he will not try us, and after which nothing shall prevent our utter Desolation and Ruine.

II. We may observe, that, according to the Representations of the same *Holy Scriptures*, There is *not* a Day for the final Ruine of any Nations or Societies, so determined by God, but that, if they repent, before that Time come, they shall certainly be pardoned, and blessed with Prosperity and Success. Thus *Noab* was to preach Repentance and Righteousness to the World before the Flood, in order to prevent that great Calamity; and an Hundred and twenty Years were given, to try if they would hear his Voice and live. Thus *Jonas* was ordered by God to go to *Nineveh*, and cry aloud in it, *yet Forty Days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown*; and yet, when all the People of that City joined together to humble themselves before God, and God saw their Works, that they turned from their evil Ways, God repented of the Evil he had said he would do unto them, and he did it not. Thus, without doubt, he would have done with the *Jews*; if they had repented, and seen the Things that belonged to their Peace in

in that their Day, which was destined to be ~~S E R M.~~ their last Trial: if, instead of rejecting the ~~XVIII.~~ Lord of Life, they had accepted his Offers, and become his Subjects and Servants; all their stoning and killing the Prophets, that had been sent before, and all their numberless past Provocations, would have been pardoned and forgotten.

For that this was the Method in which He would always proceed, He himself had assured the Jews by his Prophet *Jeremiah* (xviii. 7.) *At what Instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that Nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil Ways, I will repent of the Evil that I thought to do unto them*, i. e. I will not do it, tho' I have threatned it in Words of the most peremptory, and absolute, Sort. If Repentance intervene, the Evil shall never be executed; and it is threatened, upon Supposition only that a Repentance does not follow upon such Threatning. And this is a very considerable Satisfaction, that we have not to do with an arbitrary and unreasonable Tyrant, but one who desires and wishes our Repentance; who threatens Ruine, in order to bring a Nation to Repentance and Amendment; and who does not threaten it, in order to execute it, if Re-

S E R M. pentance and Amendment intervene. *Turn*  
~~XVIII.~~ *ye, turn ye; why will ye die, O House of Israel?*  
And thus he speaks not only to Them, but to  
all Nations and Societies: *Turn ye from your*  
*evil Ways, and so Iniquity shall not be your*  
*Ruine.* ... But,

III. We are led, by the Case before Us of *Jerusalem*, and the *Jewish* Nation, to observe, That, before the final Ruine of any Nation or Society, God uses many and sufficient Means to reform and amend them: *How often, says our Lord to Jerusalem, would I have gathered thy Children together, even as a Hen gathereth her Chicken under her Wings; and Ye would not?* How many Prophets were sent, with mighty Signs and Wonders, to allarm this People of the *Jews*? how many wise Men to guide and instruct them? With how immediate and special a Regard did God himself dwell amongst them, and preside over them? How many extraordinary and miraculous Mercies, Deliverances, and Victories, were they blessed with? And, because that Method was unsuccessful, how many Plagues and Judgments, Famines, Swords, and Pestilences, did they experience? And, after they had been Proof against Instruction, against Mercies, and Judgments, and all other Efforts of his Good-will, *last of all be*

he sent unto them his Son, with all the Signs, and ~~S E R M.~~ Miracles, and Evidences, of the promised ~~xviii.~~ Messiah; in order, at the very Approach of ~~the~~ the End of his Forbearance, to prevent their Ruine by their Amendment. Almighty God himself gives an Account, in the *Fifth Chap.* of *Isaiah*, what he had done to his Vineyard. *And now, says he, O Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and Men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt Me and my Vineyard; what could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it?* And this is a plain Demonstration of his Mercy, and Long-suffering, that, altho' he must, in Justice, and lest Virtue should perish from off the Earth, sometimes decree the utter Ruine and Desolation of a People; yet, before that, he tries many and different Methods to bring them to Reformation: A certain Proof, I say, that he delights not in their Ruine; that *Judgment is his strange Work*, in this Sense, that it is not what by Choice He inclines to: Nay, that, before a Nation be totally destroyed, it must be past even the Possibility of Recovering, by those Methods in which God thinks fit to deal with such Creatures as We are.

Having gone over those *Three* Observations I proposed at first, it will not be improper to consider

SER. M. consider two *Questions*, which offer themselves upon this Subject. The *first* is, why whole Societies and Nations are often punished so remarkably in this World? And the *other* is, why *good Men* often suffer in those Calamities and Destructions, which are brought on a People for the Wickedness of others?

*First*, Why whole Societies and Nations of Men are punished often, in so remarkable a Manner, in this World. And the plain Reasons seem to me to be these two. 1. Because when once a whole Society, or Nation, is universally corrupt and debauched, Virtue must necessarily, and infallibly, perish from amongst the Men of that Society or Nation; and, Secondly, that this Destruction may be an Example to all other Societies. As to the first, the Corruption of a whole Nation is not like the Corruption of a particular Person; which may be let alone, and yet the Cause of Virtue and Goodness not run so very low, but that there may be Encouragement enough left to others to be religious and good: but it is of so very bad Consequence, that there is not the least Probability, if it be not restrained and checked, by some extraordinary Methods, that Virtue should ever shew its Head again in that Nation. The Examples in such a Society are bad;

bad ; the Education of Youth directly leading to Vice and Debauchery ; the Principles upon which Men act apparently wicked, and tending on still to greater and greater Degrees of Wickedness. Now God, as he is holy, and of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity opposing itself to those Rules, He himself acts, and would have all others act, by ; as He is the Governor and Judge of the World ; is concerned to hinder, by all possible Methods, such an universal Wickedness as would ruine Virtue, so that it should have no Hopes of ever appearing again. And this is a sufficient Reason why he should use Judgments and Calamities, as well as Mercies, to prevent such an Increase of it in a Nation : and, if those lesser Methods are not successful, why he should bring utter Ruine and Desolation upon that whole Nation. Especially considering,

2. What a moving Example this may be to other Societies and Nations. Precedents, or Examples, are apt to influence our Minds very much : And to see how other Societies of People have been lost and ruined, when they refused to be reformed by milder Methods, naturally leads us to think how it must fare at last with Ourselves, if we go on. For the

SERM. the Question presently offers itself to our  
xviii. Minds, what Reason is there why We should  
hope to be excepted? or, if we imitate other  
incorrigible Nations, in our Manners and Be-  
haviour, why should We not resemble them in  
a remarkable and fatal End? Almighty God  
may therefore, justly punish wicked Societies, or  
Nations, to affright them from going on to a  
State of universal, settled, unrestrained Wicked-  
ness; and, if that cannot be done, may punish  
them with an utter Destruction, rather than  
permit such universal Wickedness to triumph  
and flourish, or suffer a Foundation to be laid  
for an uninterrupted Course of it. For this is  
exactly agreeable to the Rules of his Supreme  
Moral Government: as it is absolutely necessary  
to the maintaining the World in any tolerable  
Order, and consulting the Happiness of other  
Societies, and of those Persons that shall be  
born after, who will be allarmed by these Ex-  
amples, to fly from what has before brought  
down Ruine upon whole Nations. *When thy  
Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of  
the World will learn Righteousness,* says the  
Prophet. When there is a remarkable Visita-  
tion, a visible Punishment of the Sins of any  
Nation; this will draw the Eyes of others,  
and teach them, that Righteousness is the only

sure Way to establish the Happiness of a Peo- S E R M. xviii.ple. For if, (as Solomon says) because Sen-  
tence against any one evil Work, is not spee-  
dily executed, therefore the Hearts of the Sons  
of Men are fully set in them to do Evil; Cer-  
tainly, if Sentence were never executed in  
this World against the great and repeated  
evil Works, of which a whole Body of Men  
are notoriously and universally guilty, much  
more would the Hearts of the Sons of Men  
be set in them to do Evil; when They have  
Reason to think themselves secure; and so  
all Religion and Virtue would, by Degrees,  
long ago have vanished from the Earth. These  
two Reasons seem fully sufficient to satisfy  
us, why God should often punish, and some-  
times totally destroy, Societies and Nations of  
Men.

There is another Reason, why wicked  
Societies and Nations should be punished in  
*this* World, mentioned by Some, *viz.* because  
they cannot be punished, *as Societies*, in the  
World to come. But this I do not urge,  
because I either do not understand it; or do  
not understand it to be a good Reason: and  
because the Reasons I mentioned before seem  
to be fully sufficient, without inquiring after  
any others.

I come

SER.M. I come now to another Question, which has  
XVIII. sometimes been asked upon this Subject, *viz.*  
Why good Men often suffer in those Calamities,  
and Destructions, which are brought on  
any Society, or Nation, for the Sins of others?  
And as to this, supposing the Fact true,

1. We may observe, that good Men have  
often very great Imprudences and Weak-  
nesses: and these may, sometimes, naturally  
tend to help on public Calamities and Mis-  
fortunes.

Some of the best of them may be Men of  
great natural Passions, hurrying them on to sud-  
den Resolutions, and Counsels; and at the same  
Time of so little Reach, as to be easily mista-  
ken in their political Conduct; and think *That*  
to be good for the repairing the Breaches of a  
Nation, which will really help to widen  
them; and *That* for the Interest and Happi-  
ness of a People, which really tends to their  
Ruine and Unhappiness. Almighty God is  
not obliged to free the Minds of good Men  
from all Failings, or to conquer their Passions  
miraculously, for them; or to give their  
Minds such a Reach, as that they shall not  
mistake in their Notions of public Interest  
and Happiness; and they may justly suf-  
fer in those temporal Evils which they them-  
selves

selves thus help to bring upon their Country. S E R M.  
But XVIII.

2. There may be many good Men, unexceptionable in their private and personal Conduct, who think it sufficient to look after themselves, and are too little concerned at seeing their Country over-run with Wickedness, to use their Endeavours to give a Check to it, or to put in Execution the best Laws made against the Progress of That which tends to the final Ruine of a Nation. The Instances before mentioned, from the sacred History, would teach them another Lesson. *Noah* was preserved from the general Flood: but then, he not only was a good Man himself, but had Zeal enough to make him concern himself for other People, and even to be troublesome to them, by being a *Preacher of Righteousness*, (as *St. Peter* says) in order to reclaim them, and prevent that Ruine that threatened them. So *Lot* was delivered, when *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were consumed; but then, he was not only righteous himself, but *St. Peter* observes, that *That righteous Man dwelling amongst them, in seeing and bearing vexed his righteous Soul, from Day to Day, with their unlawful Deeds*; nay, interested himself so much in their Behaviour, as not only to be grieved at their Impieties, but, without doubt, to endeavour their Reformation:

S E R M. mation: For so much we gather with great  
xviii. Reason, from that Speech of the Inhabitants of  
Sodom, *This one Fellow came in to sojourn, and  
he will needs be a judge*, Gen. xiv. 9.

In these Cases, therefore, in which the unactive Coldness of some, or the weak Understandings, or strong Passions, of other, good Men, have naturally tended, and led to the Ruine of that Society to which they belong; they themselves cannot think Almighty God to act unjustly by them, if he does not miraculously exempt them, from the common Lot in such Calamities, as may indeed justly be said to be brought upon their Country for the sake of the *Wickedness* of Others, but yet are such as these good Men themselves did not endeavour to prevent by their Zeal and Interposition; or perhaps helped forward by the Imprudence of their Counsels, or Violence of their natural Tempers. But,

3. It will take away the very Ground of this Objection, to observe that, according to the Representations of the Scriptures, the Fact itself is not certainly true. We all know that the same Holy Books, which relate the Stories of the Desolation of Cities and Nations, for the Wickedness of the People, give us Instances of good Men wonderfully preserved, and delivered, in such Calamities. Thus, when

when the Old World was to be destroyed, we ~~SERM.~~  
find *Noah*, a good and righteous Person, who ~~WILL~~  
had never either assented to, or winked at,  
the Wickedness of those about him, strangely  
delivered by the Particular Providence of God,  
when the Flood was brought upon the World  
of the Ungodly.

Thus, when the Cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were turned into Ashes, and *condemned* with an *Overthrow*, just *Lot*, who was vexed with the *filthy Conversation of the Wicked*; who abhorred their Deeds, and was righteous in Opposition to all their Examples, was delivered and sent away from that fiery Destruction. These are taken notice of by *St. Peter*, as a sufficient Foundation to ground this Consequence upon, *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly*, (2 Pet. ii. 9.) Nay, Almighty God seems himself by the Prophet *Ezekiel* (Chap. xiv. 12, &c.) to give such good and holy Persons (under the Names of *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Job*,) a Title to such a Deliverance: in this Case of the extroardinary Punishment of a Society, by the Hand of God, expressly for the Sins of the wicked Part of it; repeating this often, that tho' they should not deliver any other Persons, yet they should deliver their own Souls, by their Righteousness.

And indeed, it seems agreeable to Reason,  
C c and

SER M. and Equity, that, in those Cases, in which it  
xviii. pleases Almighty God thus immediately to in-  
terpose, and bring immediate Desolation upon  
any Society, for the sake of the Wickedness of  
Many of the Men who compose it ; That, I  
say, in such Cases, the *truly Good Men* belong-  
ing to it should be preserved and delivered.  
Otherwise, these Calamities could not well be  
said to be decreed, or wrought, by God him-  
self, for the Punishment of such Wickedness  
only.

And this appears plainly to be the very Foun-  
dation and Strength of *Abraham's Argument*,  
in the Eighteenth Chapter of *Genesis*. There  
we find, at the 20<sup>th</sup> Verse, That GOD is said  
to condescend to inform *Abraham* of his Reso-  
lution with regard to *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*,  
which, it is plain from *Abraham's Answer*, was  
a Declaration, that He would himself interpose,  
and bring a total Destruction upon those Cities,  
solely on account of the enormous Wickedness  
of the Inhabitants. This was the Fact, which  
moved *Abraham* to the Boldness of Arguing  
with God himself, upon the Principles of Jus-  
tice and Equity, from Verse 23, to the End.  
*Wilt Thou also destroy the Righteous with the  
Wicked — That be far from Thee to do after this  
manner, to slay the Righteous with the Wicked ;  
and that the Righteous should be as the Wicked ;*  
That

That be far from thee. Shall not the Judge of all S E R M. the Earth do right? This is his Argument, xviii. Since this Destruction is to be brought upon these Places for the Sins of the Wicked only, strict Justice requires that the righteous Part of the People should not be destroyed for the Wickedness of Others, for the sake of which alone the Destruction is brought. *Abraham's* main Intention is not to intercede for Those whose *Iniquities were full*; but to contend, from the Nature of Justice, and of God himself, That a Method ought to be found for the Preservation of the Righteous, in such a particular Case. And we see, the Great God is so far from being displeased with a Mortal Man for pretending to argue with him, from such excellent Principles; that He plainly approves of the Argument, and goes so far as to declare, That, rather than the Righteous shall not be preserved, He will, for their Sakes, if a Few be found, spare the City, and even put off the Destruction of the Wicked, now ripe for his Vengeance. And, as it appears that there was but one good Man and Family there; This one Man and Family alone are preserved. And thus we see, that it is the Representation of Holy Scripture, that Good Men are actually delivered, and preserved, according to the Rules of Justice, by that God, that Righteous Judge of

S E R M. the Earth, in those Desolations and Destructi-  
xviii. ons, which He himself immediately brings  
upon a People, expressly and merely on ac-  
count of the crying Wickedness, of the Worst  
Part of them. And this is the Case particu-  
larly meant in the Objection. For,

4. As for Those Destructive, or Calami-  
tous Events, apparently arising from the Ori-  
ginal Frame and Contexture of this Earth,  
or of the Air around it; or from the Imper-  
fections, Weaknesses, and Wickedness of Men  
themselves, the Inhabitants of this Earth; or  
from any the like Causes; the Good Part of  
Mankind, (the Best of whom have many Im-  
perfections, and are placed Here, only as in a  
Country, designed not for a Paradise, or their  
Heaven, but for a State of Probation, suitable  
to the Ends proposed by their Maker,) ought  
not to complain, that They partake with the  
Wicked in such Sort of Evils, natural to this  
State. Nor do the Justice and Equity of God's  
Government need any Vindication, on account  
of Good Men suffering with the Wicked, in  
these and the like common Calamities of Na-  
ture, any more than They do, on account of  
his not exempting the Best of Men from the  
common Lot of Sicknes, and even Death it-  
self, pronounced and executed equally upon

This is all that I can presume to offer concerning the Case of good Men's suffering, in Calamities brought upon any Nation, for the Sins of Others : And if what I have said upon so dark a Subject, not entirely laid open to our Capacities, cannot fully answer the *Curiosity* of Some, or the honest Desire of Satisfaction in Others, yet it seems sufficient to abate the Force of the Objection ; and to give Them some ground to think, that there may be still stronger Reasons, in the Counsels of the All-knowing GOD, for this Method of proceeding with the Best, as well as Worst, Part of his imperfect Creatures, in this present State of Things.

Having thus gone over the Three principal Points I first proposed ; and then considered *Two Difficulties*, arising upon Them ; I will only now make a short Application of all to Ourselves, and our own Nation.

If it appears from what has been said, That Success and Prosperity have, by the Command and Laws of the Great Governour of the World, attended upon Families, and Nations, where Religion and Virtue have been encouraged and practised ; we may conclude, that the same will wait upon Us, if Religion and Virtue are

390 *A Sermon preached on Sept. 2, 1702.*

SERM. encouraged and practised amongst us. If we  
xviii. read that his Wrath has been executed, and  
a remarkable Vengeance taken, upon Nations in  
which Impiety and Immorality have been tri-  
umphant; we may be certain, that Desolation  
and Destruction is appointed for Us, if Im-  
piety and Debauchery triumph in the same  
manner amongst us. And, to be more parti-  
cular, As We find by the Words upon which  
I have been discoursing, and other Passages of  
the Gospel, that the Nation of the *Jews*, in our  
Saviour's Time, were called upon to cast back  
their Eyes upon all the Trials God had for-  
merly made of them, and all the Methods He  
had used to amend them; not only by his Pro-  
phets, but by all his Mercies, and all his Judg-  
ments: and were plainly told, that after all the  
ungrateful Returns made by them, God would  
not strive with them much longer; but that, if  
they did not truly repent, and receive their Mes-  
siah, the Day of Destruction was soon to come  
upon them: so, We of this Nation may find too  
much Reason to think that That Day is not at  
any very great Distance from us, beyond which  
God will not try us, or bear with us; I mean,  
if we consider how many Methods he has used  
to awaken us, and how little we have hither-  
to been alarmed, to any good Purpose of A-  
mendment: how many Happinesses and Mer-  
cies

ties He has favoured Us with, as a Nation — SERM. Placed Us in a Situation, and in Circumstances, xviii. which point out to Us all Opportunities imaginable of being a great and flourishing People; — Made us the Subjects of a Power governed by Laws, and not of Arbitrary and Unbound-ed Tyranny; often delivered our Liberties and Lives from imminent Ruine, and our Happiness from the very Jaws of Destruction; — Called us to the Knowledge of his *Gospel* (a Mercy which we can never duly value) not as it was hid, and obscured, and made useleſs, by ignorant and wicked Men, but, by his Providence, restored to Light, so far, as to lie open to All, in that Native Simplicity and Purity, in which his first Followers preached, and wrote it, for the Use of All. And, to engage us the more to it, He himself has made This happy Condition of Ours so much his Care, that no Attempts hitherto against it have pro-spered, but all have been wonderfully defeated. And then We may go on to consider, That, as Mercies have not been wanting to draw us, so neither have Judgments to alarm and drive Us of this Generation to Amendment. It is not very long since all was Confusion and Disor-der; since the Sword of Civil Fury was dyed in Blood and Slaughter; nor much less Time, since a fatal Pestilence raged amongst Us, and

S E R M. a terrible *Fire* laid waste this City. Now, if we  
XVIII. reflect on all these, we must think, either that  
we are amended and reformed so much as to  
turn away God's Displeasure; or else, that the  
Day for Ruine and Destruction cannot be at a  
very great Distance, unless we do very soon  
and very seriously prevent it, by forsaking our  
Vices, and turning to Him in Holiness and  
Righteousness of Life. For thus We should  
call to Remembrance, He has dealt with the  
Nations of old; and particularly, with his  
chosen People, the People of *Israel*. And  
therefore, We should argue, in this same  
Manner, and these same Methods, will He  
deal with us, in the future Dispensations of  
his Mercy, or of his Wrath.

The Thoughts, which I have now pointed  
out, will, in their natural Tendency, lead us all  
most heartily to endeavour to amend our own  
Lives, and to do what in Us lies to discourage,  
and put a stop to, the open Wickedness of O-  
thers; and so to consult our own Interest and  
Happiness, in the Prosperity and Happiness of  
that Nation, and Society, of which we are  
Members. And, as what I have now offered  
cannot but be thought very seasonable upon  
the Occasion, which has at this Time brought  
Us together; so, let me add, with regard to  
our present publick Circumstances; that such

Con-

Considerations can never be more seasonable, S E R M. than at a Time, when a Torrent of open XVIII. Wickedness, and Shameful Divisions at *Home*, ~ and a Powerful Enemy *Abroad*, seem to conspire to open the Way, to the Ruine of all that is dear to Us, as *Englishmen*, and *Protestants*.

God grant, *We may know, even We, in this our Day, the Things that belong to our Peace*; and all of Us act according to what *We* see to be our Duty, and our *Interest*!

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## SERMON XIX.

Preached at St. Peter's Poor, March 8, 1708-9,  
being the Anniversary of the Queen's Ac-  
cession, &c.

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I TIM. ii. 1, 2.

*I exhort therefore, that first of all Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks, be made for all Men: for Kings, and for all that are in Authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in all Godliness and Honesty.*

SER M. **T**HESSE Words are a Direction to *Timothy*, who had the Care and Over-sight both of Pastors and People, in the Parts about *Ephesus*; and they relate to the public Prayers of *Christian* Congregations: exhorting, that they should extend their Charity to the whole World, by recommending all Mankind to the Favour of Almighty God; particularly, that they should pray, and give Thanks, for Kings, and all that were in Authority,

thority, or, as the Margin expresses it, nearer S E R M. to the Original, *in eminent Place*; for All whom xix. the Providence of God has raised to any Degree  of Power; that they should pray for all such, that *Christians* might lead a quiet and peaceable Life under them, in all Godliness and Honesty. Which last Words are either designed to direct them what should be the Matter of their Prayers; or else to express one End which he proposed by *Christians* thus publickly praying for All in Authority, or Eminence; *viz.* that these Persons in Power might be induced by this to be favourable to them, or, at least, not to treat them as Enemies. If they be understood the first Way, the Direction is, That they should pray for all in Eminence, to this Effect, that God would be pleased so to dispose their Hearts, that They might so use their Power, as that so good Men, and Professors of so holy a Religion, as the *Christians*, might be safe and secure under them; that they might be Terrors only to Evil-doers, and a Praise and Safe-guard to them that do well. If they be understood in the latter Sense, as one End proposed by St. *Paul*, why *Christians* should at that Time particularly pray for all in high Stations, the Meaning of them will be this, That he would have them pray for their Superiors and Governours, not only because

S E R M. because it was their Duty, but because it was  
xix. their Interest ; to the End that those Men in  
Power might be induced, when they knew that  
*Christians* did heartily pray for them, to use  
them as Friends ; to permit them to lead quiet  
and peaceable Lives, and not to persecute and  
harrass them as Enemies ; that so the Church  
might have Peace and Encouragement by  
means of the powerful Men of the World,  
when they should find that *Christianity* was no  
Enemy to them, or their Government, but  
was likely to be a great Support to it, by its  
Prayers and Intercessions for them.

Both these Ways may the Words, I think,  
be understood ; tho' I rather think, that St.  
*Paul* might have the latter in his Eye, at a  
Time when *Christianity* was surrounded with  
Enemies ; and perpetual Persecution was very  
likely to be its Fate, from the Notion that  
they had entertained, of its disposing Men to  
be of turbulent, and troublesome, and ungovernable  
Tempers ; or that, being wholly taken  
up with the Thoughts of another State of  
Happiness, to come hereafter, they might be  
entirely disregardful of the Interest and Good  
of Human Society below.

My Design is not to insist upon these Words  
as they may peculiarly belong to the first *Christians*, surrounded by Enemies, looked upon  
with

with a jealous Eye by Princes and Men in S E R M. Power, and continually liable to the Frowns xix. of all around them; but to consider them with ~~  
a more general View, as they may be applied, and very reasonably supposed to be directed, to all *Christians*, in all Ages, under all Forms of Government: and to Ourselves in particular, under an excellent Form of Government, and an excellent *QUEEN*, who, as this Day, by the Providence of God, succeeded to the Crown, and Glory, of her Illustrious Predecessor.

Only before I proceed, I cannot forbear remarking, how eager some Men are to catch at any thing that may impose a Yoke of Bondage upon Themselves and their Neighbours, when they lay hold on such a Text as this; and argue, from St. Paul's commanding *Christians* to pray for all in Eminence, or Power, that he commanded them, in this, to be wholly passive, at all Times, and in all Circumstances, under all possible ill Usage, even under such Administrations as must ruin the whole public Society, as well as themselves; nay, farther, that they should pray for Prosperity to Those in Power, in all their violent Attempts, and all their Undertakings of all Sorts. But, in one word, they may as well argue, from our being commanded to pray for our Enemies, or from our being commanded to

S E R M. to pray for all Men here in the Text, that we  
xix. are therefore obliged to wish them well in all  
their unjust Attempts against Ourselves; nay,  
in all their contradictory Designs against one  
another; to submit our Necks, our Families,  
our worldly Concerns, to the Insults and the  
Devastation of any who will be so hardy as to  
attack us, and to attempt our Ruine. And if  
some of the primitive *Christians* do, in their A-  
pologies, declare to the Emperours, in abso-  
lute Terms, and without any Exceptions,  
that They pray for their Happiness and Suc-  
cess; it must be said, that they could mean this  
in no Sense pleasing to Almighty God, but in  
this, that they might be prospered and find  
Success in all their lawful and honourable En-  
terprizes; or else, if They meant this, in any  
other Sense, that these *Christians*, who were  
fallible Men, mistook the Nature of their Du-  
ty; and put up Prayers very unacceptable to  
the great Fountain of Good, and Lover of  
That only which is ever Just and Right.

To prosecute my present Design, it will be  
proper,

*First*, to consider the Importance and Burthen  
of Government; together with the unspeak-  
able Benefit of good Government; from which,

*Secondly*, we may easily see, both the Need

there is of the heartiest united Prayers of the S E R M. governed Society, in the Behalf of Governours; xix. and likewise, what must be the chief Matter ~~of~~ of these Prayers, as well as of their Thanksgivings, plainly pointed out in those Words, *That we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives, in all Godliness and Honesty.*

After which, there will not need many Words to apply what shall have been said, to the present Occasion of our meeting together; and the Blessings which this Day has continued and confirmed to us.

*First,* The Importance and Burthen of Government deserves to be spoken to, together with the unspeakable and extensive Benefit of good Government. Were one to judge of Matters by mere Outside and Shew; or, were one to form his Sentiments, concerning Objects, by the Zeal that poor Mortals shew to obtain them, one would think a State of Power, and Riches, (which are the Sinews of Power,) to be the most lovely and desireable State in the World; made up of nothing but most agreeable Amusements, or magnificent Scenes of all that is desirable.

Through how much Blood, and at the Expence of how many Thousand Lives, will a Man, fired by Ambition, seek after a Crown that is to be purchased at any rate; and think per-

SER M. perhaps, all the while, that he is in Pursuit of  
xix. one of the most agreeable Stations this World  
can shew? And how eager will the Contention  
often be, even where one would think Men have  
had enough of their own Power before, and  
felt enough of the Weight of Government?  
But, there being something gawdy and great  
in outward Appearance, the Senses of Men  
are more taken up with the Outside, than their  
Reason and Consideration are with what is with-  
in. For, alas! if the Matter be laid open,  
how many Thorns grow inwards? how many  
Cares, and Fears, and Anxieties, must molest,  
even one, who is but little sollicitous about the  
good Estate of those under him? How many  
Enmities must he encounter, how many Par-  
ties must he steer between, how many Appli-  
cations must he endure? how many Jealousies  
must he entertain, of every Thing, and every  
Body? especially if he knows himself rather to  
be an Enemy, than a Friend, to his People?

But I speak not merely of this. Put the  
Case, that the true End of Government be con-  
stantly in the View of the Governour, and  
that it is his sincere Intention to consult the  
Good and Interest of the Governed; what a  
laborious, what an uninterrupted Course of  
Cares and Anxieties? what a Burthen of never-  
ceasing Thought, (the Labour of the Mind,) doth

doth this imply in it? To guard against the e-~~S E R M.~~  
vil Designs of Flatterers, and artful Courtiers; xix.  
against those who press for high Stations, in ~~the~~  
order to hinder the good Influences of better  
Men above them; and only to answer their  
own private Ends; to combat the Enmity and  
Opposition of those who dislike every thing  
that is truly good, and never put more Impe-  
diments in the Way of Governours, than when  
they are truly in the Interest of the People un-  
der them: To see with the Eyes of Others;  
and yet to see Things in their true Colours;  
to hear with the Ears of Others, and yet not to  
be deceived; to penetrate into the dark Re-  
cesses of the Breast of Others; to be Proof a-  
gainst Vain, and Empty, and Extravagant  
Complements, and to be armed against rough  
and unmannerly Contradiction: To know what  
is the true Interest of a People, in every consi-  
derable Branch; to have Courage enough to  
profess this to be their own; to have Conduct  
enough to prosecute it in the wisest Methods;  
and Hardiness to adhere to it, against all the  
deluding Offers, and all the boldest Threats,  
to the contrary: To do Justice impartially, and  
yet to exercise Mercy in due Time and Place:  
What shall I say? To act the Part of a God in  
the World, by Beneficence and Goodness; to  
protect the Injured, to defend the Oppressed,

S E R M. and to be ever prepared for all Occasions of  
**XIX.** doing good.

This is the Part of Governours, the Part of all who are possessed of Civil Power, in their several Places and Stations. And is not this a Burthen that requires God's Assistance ; a Burthen for more than human Abilities ? But how excellent in its Use, and how beneficial, when this Burthen is borne, and this Office executed, by Such as are not taken with the external Title and Appearance, but regard the internal Parts of it, and its true Design ! how doth the benign Influence descend from the Head down to the lowest Parts of the Body ? Mutual Love, Rest, Quiet, Security, in all their Concerns ; These and many more Goods, are owing to the Fountain above, from whence they flow in mighty and useful Streams. On the contrary, when all this internal Part of Government is disregarded, and only the external Grandeur aimed at, and carried to an Excess of Height by a Governour, how doth the Malignity of this spread itself over a Country ? Uneasiness, and Misery, and every evil Work, is the Effect : and Nothing good to be depended upon ; but every thing that is valuable or delightful, to be sacrificed to Humour and Passion !

Let him

Let us therefore, *Secondly*, learn from hence SE R M how much it concerns us, and our Governours, xix. that we heartily and fervently put up our Prayers to God, for Them ; that this laborious and invidious Task may be made light and easy, through the kind Dispositions of his Providence, to all such as truly design his Glory, and the Good of those over whom they are placed. For indeed, his fatherly Eye, and friendly Concurrence, seem more necessary in *This*, than in any other secular Work whatsoever : as it is evident that in *This*, the Happiness, or Misery, of whole Nations, and of the Children yet unborn, are highly concerned.

And hence We shall be naturally led to see, what the Matter, and chief Subject, of our Prayers, should be. For Instance, that, through the kind Dispositions of Providence, it may not be in the Power of evil-minded Men to disturb the Reign, or obstruct the Management, of such Rulers as are indeed a Terror to evil Works, and a Praise to them that do well ; that they may have Eyes perpetually open to see, and Ears perpetually disposed to hear, what is for the common and universal Interest ; that they may have Hearts armed against every thing that can hinder the Prosecution of it, and Courage and Conduct to make Government as useful as God Almighty

SER M. designed it should be: That every thing may be  
 XIX. proposed and passed into Laws, that may establish  
 ~~~~~ Peace and Righteousness upon a lasting  
 Foundation; and build up such a Structure
 of Public Virtue and Happiness, as no Time
 may be able to demolish, nor any Attempts to
 ruin.

To these Subjects of our Prayers, the Importance, the Burthen, the Nature, and the End of their Office direct us.

For their temporal Prosperity and Success we must frame our serious Wishes, and adapt our Prayers, so as to make them agreeable, in all Respects, to the Will of God: and this can be only done effectually, by praying to God that They may be successful in all such Designs and Endeavours as are approved of by him; as are just, honourable, reasonable, fitting, and becoming: all beyond this being little less than Blasphemy. To pray to God that any Persons may have Success in Works which He hates and abhors; in the Works of that evil Spirit which is always represented as the greatest Enemy to his Will; is to affront and anger Him. The Gospel of *Christ* knows no such Duty as this. Tho' the Duty of Prayer for *Governours* be laid down in general Terms; yet common Sense, and the Commands of God in other Cases, must regulate and bring this into due

Form. Suppose all the Mariners and Passen-^{SER M.}
gers, in a Ship, were commanded to pray for
their Pilot, and for his Success, in general
Terms; could any one argue from hence, that
they are obliged to pray for Success to him,
even when he is endeavouring to split the Ship
upon a Rock, to dash it into a thousand Pieces,
and destroy the Life of every one in it: and
could not every one understand such a general
Expression to imply in it only an Obligation to
such Prayer as is suitable to the Nature and
End of his Office, the preserving the Ship,
and bringing it safe into Port.

So, in the Case of Thanksgiving, if that
were likewise enjoined; could any Man be so
absurd as to say, that those Passengers, who
saw this Danger evidently, and the evil Design
of this Pilot, were yet obliged to bless God
for such a Pilot, who was just going, evident-
ly, to dash them against a Rock, and to destroy
both their Goods and their Lives?

Besides, if the *Christian* Religion can be sup-
posed to enjoin either Prayer, or Thanksgiving,
in so unlimited a Manner; then must it be sup-
posed, that the *Christians* of several Countries
must be obliged in Duty to pray to God for the
most contradictory things in Nature: one Part,
that he will please to prosper Tyranny and Op-
pression; another Part, that he will be pleased

SERM. to give Success to Justice, and prosper the best
XIX. of Administrations; which it is highly absurd
to fix upon the *Christian* Institution. Can those
Subjects of any Monarch, in Countries abroad,
for instance, who groan under his Oppression
and his exorbitant Demands, for the sake of
what they themselves may think unjust At-
tempts of Force and War upon Others; can such
Christian Subjects, I say, be obliged by
the *Gospel* to pray for his outward Prosperity in
all his Undertakings? This cannot be the Duty
of such unhappy Subjects. We of this Nation,
indeed, feel the Sweets of good Government,
and know what it is to be engaged in a righteous
Cause; and therefore, are obliged to pray for
Success to our Sovereign, whom we willingly
obey, and of whose Administration we are so
gratefully sensible, and of whose Justice in the
Cause She publickly maintains in *Europe*, we are
so perfectly satisfied. This is the Difference be-
tween Us and Others. And, as it is impossible
that Contradictions should be true; it is impos-
sible that the Duty of *Christians*, in several
Places, should be so absolutely contradictory to
itself. No, our Prayers and Thanksgivings
must be agreeable to God's Will. We must
not pray to him to prosper Wickedness, even
in high Places: nor must we thank him, as for
temporal Blessings, for the Victories of Tyranny.

For

For this is to thank Him, for what is, in truth, ^{S E R M.} one of the greatest Curses that even his Almighty Power can send down upon any Nation. xix. 
A Curse, which some Nations Abroad may either labour against, or thank God for, according as their Hearts and Dispositions have been preserved in their natural State ; or by continual Oppression, and the Custom of Injury and Insult, are become callous and totally insensible. For our Parts, we know no such Sentiment ; and therefore cannot, without Blasphemy, think that the Success of Power, sporting itself in the Miseries of Those around it, can be any Subject for Thanksgiving to the great Governour of the World ; who wishes Happiness to all Civil Societies, and expects from their Rulers, a constant Attention to that Happiness, for which they were set over their People.

The *Third Particular* proposed was this, Supposing that the Subject of our Prayers be granted, or that it pleases God to give us that uncommon Blessing of good and just Government over us ; what our Behaviour, under a Sense of this, ought to be ; and what Use we ought to make of so great an Happiness. These are particularly pointed out to us in the last Words of the Text, *That we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in all Godliness and Honesty.*

S E R M. *First,* This is the very End proposed by the
XIX. *Apostle,* in these *Intercessions* which he recommends for *Kings*, and all others in Authority ; that, shewing Ourselves thus their sincere Friends and Well-wishers, we may, under them, enjoy an undisturbed Repose, and a State of *Quiet*, which we could not so well hope for, if we did not give them this Testimony of our Affection and Good-will. This is as great an Happiness, as the Condition of Men in this World allows to any Society ; to enjoy, under the Protection of Power, lodged in good Hands, and exercised in the Manner and to the End for which alone it was appointed, the Comforts, and Conveniences of Life, as well as Necessaries ; to reap the Fruits of their own Labours, and possess their own Acquisitions and Inheritances, without the continual Dread of Violence, and Arbitrary Rage, tearing them away and consuming them all. An Happiness, which we of this Part of the World, at this Time, may be said peculiarly to enjoy, whilst we may view, at a great Distance, the Storms and Tempests which beat upon others ; and the Exercise of all Power by military Force, to the utter Ruine of the *Quiet* and *Repose* of their Lives, and of the peaceful Injoyment of what they have at least as strict a Right to enjoy securely, as their Governors have to rule over them. And hence indeed,

deed, will appear our peculiar great Concern in SERM. these Expressions. For if we are so peculiarly happy, as that our Governours watch over us, and rule us by Laws made and known by Ourselves; and make our peaceable Possession of what is our own, as secure as this World admits of; we must be void of all Sense, and abandoned of all Understanding, to be Ourselves the Troublers of our own calm and smooth Waters; and, by unreasonable and undeserved Noise and Disquiet, to break in upon such a happy Scene of public Serenity, as can alone give a Relish to all the Goods of the Earth; and alone secure the Happiness of Ourselves, and Families, and Posterity, in it. But,

Secondly, There is something farther added by the *Apostle*, in his Description of the Conduct of *Christians*, under the Sense of the great Blessing of a good and beneficent Government. They must not only lead *quiet and peaceable Lives*, but must lead their Lives *in all Godliness, and Honesty*: Religion and Piety towards God, and Honesty, or, (as the Word signifies) all that is *decent* and becoming towards Men; These are recommended, as our own Duty; and, in the next Verses, hinted at, as the most proper and efficacious Means to reconcile all around us, not only to us Ourselves, but to God himself, *who wills*, and desires most affection-

S E R M. fectionately, that *all Men should be saved*, as well
XIX. as *Ourselves*, by *coming to the Knowledge of his*
Truth.

But tho' this was said, when the *Christians* were in the midst of *Heathens*, and *Unbelievers*; yet the *Injunction*, and the *Reason* of it, still subsists in great Force. For *Christian* *Governours* want and claim our *Prayers* as well as *Heathen* ones: and *Christians*, as well now as at first, may find the good *Effect* of such a *Behaviour*, towards their *Christian* *Governours*; that it may even now tend to their own *Peace* and *Quiet*, in all their *Enjoyments*, as it did under others: and always have the same *indispensable Duty*, of leading a quiet and *peaceable Life*, in all *Godliness*, and all *Decency*, or in all and every *Practice* that is truly *lovely*, and truly becoming them in the relation they stand in, to all around them, in the *Civil Society* of which they are *Members*. This is so evident, in every *Page* of the *Gospel*, that it needs not one *Word* here to prove it; nor does the *Time* now allow me to go on upon this *Head*.

I will therefore, only add a word or two, upon a pleasing *Subject*, which offers itself unavoidably to our *Thoughts*, in applying what has been said, to the present *Occasion* of our meeting together. I believe you will be before-hand

hand with me in calling to mind, that the Prosperity, and outward Success, of the Queen, whom we obey, is our own Prosperity and Success; that when we pray for Her, we pray for Ourselves: That when we give Thanks for Her, we give Thanks for our own envied Happiness, in having One still at the Helm, who has, for many Years, so wisely steered between all the dangerous Rocks, that many Others have formerly split upon. And indeed, if we look around us, the State of all other Nations will engage us to acknowledge thankfully our own Happiness; whilst we enjoy by written *Laws*, what is truly valuable in this Life, as secure as Human Affairs can be, from the Inconveniences most to be feared in a Civil Society; and whilst the *Supreme Executive Power* is lodged in such Hands, as have made us, for a Succession of several Years, feel the kindly Influences of good Government.

I need say no more. Our own daily and hourly Experience say enough to move us to pray for the Increase of Prosperity to such a Government, and the long Continuance of such a State; and especially at a Time when the Blessings of Peace and Plenty at Home, seem to be vying with the Glory of our Arms Abroad: Moderation and Piety presiding here; Courage and Conduct exerting themselves Abroad:

S E R M. broad: and contending with each Other, in
xix. their Efforts, to establish our Happiness at pre-
sent, and to transmit it down secure to the lat-
est Posterity. May we all, therefore, in Gra-
titude for such Mercies, join our Hearts and
Voices to praise the Great Disposer of all
Things for them; and to entreat the Preserva-
tion of them! And may we all resolve, in
thankful Return to our Governours, and to
God himself, to *lead quiet and peaceable Lives,*
in all Godliness and Honesty.

Which God grant, &c.

S E R M O N XX.

Preached at the Church of St. Peter's Poor, on
May 29, 1709.

Ps A L. cxvii. former Part of ver. 1.

The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice.

TH E Sentence I have now read to You, S E R M. carries along with it a most useful Lesson; full of as much Satisfaction and Comfort, as reasonable Creatures could desire, in such Circumstances as Men are in, whilst they are upon this Earth. And what it sets forth to us is plainly this, that God, who first created all Things, doth also order the Course of this World, as we now see it; and still continues to exercise a paternal Providence over it; and to direct and govern the several Parts and Inhabitants of it: and that we have the greatest Reason to rejoice that it is so. *The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice.*

In speaking farther to these Words I propose,

First.

SERM. *First, To shew what is implied in the Assertion, The Lord reigneth ; and at the same Time, the Truth of it ; and,*

Secondly, to give some Reasons why the Inhabitants of the Earth, should rejoice because the Lord reigneth.

First, I propose to shew what is implied in this Assertion, The Lord reigneth : and at the same Time, the Truth of it. And,

1. The general Meaning of it is certainly this ; That a wise and powerful God presides over the whole World ; that nothing comes to pass without his Will, his Decree, or his Permission ; unless he sees fit to order it, or to suffer it to come to pass : That he holds the Sceptre of the Universe ; and, comprehending all Things by an infinite Knowledge, and being able to order all Things by an omnipotent Will, he doth whatever pleases him both in Heaven and Earth : That, as nothing was made without Him, so nothing, from the first Moment of the Creation, hath happened in all the vast Extent of the World, amongst all the Multitude of Beings in it, which he did not think fit either to bring to pass himself, or to let other Beings bring to pass.

But, 2. In order to be more particular, Let us consider his Government, as it respects the

the material and irrational Part of the Crea- ~~S E R M.~~
tion ; and his Government, as it respects the ~~XX.~~
intelligent and rational Part of it.

As to his Government with respect to the material and irrational Part of his Creation ; let us observe, that it was He, who, after he had created every Thing, placed and fixed it in its proper Place ; and all in that peculiar and admirable Order, in which we now find the Universe with Wonder and Astonishment. And this was one Act of Government and Empire in Him, to give Laws to all the Matter that he had put into several Forms, and allot to every Portion of it, and to every Machine, its proper Province and proper Office ; within what Bounds it should abide ; how far its Influence should reach ; what sort of Motion it should have ; with what Quickness, and with what Determination, and to what End and Purpose it should move. Thus, having collected an unconceivable Number of Particles of Light and Heat, and fixed them in one vast Body, he may be said to have impressed on it a Law, tho' it was incapable of Knowledge and Perception ; and commanded it to bear such a Relation to a certain Part of the World about it, as that the Inhabitants of it might receive Light, and Heat, and the Comforts of both, from it. And from this Time the Sun is said figuratively to have *known* its

SERM. its Rising, and its Going down; and has dis-
xx. pensed its Heat and Light in one regular and
continued Course: illuminating and invigorating
those Bodies that perform their several Motions
round it, in a stupendous and never failing
Order. Particularly, the Place and Station
of this vast Body is so ordered by this wise God,
with respect to this Earth we live on, that it
is the immediate Cause of the greatest Benefits
in Nature. If the Seasons succeed one another
in a constant and never-interrupted Course;
Autumn and Winter, Spring and Summer;
if, by this means, the Earth is prepared to af-
ford us its Riches, and doth accordingly bring
forth its Increase, and all its Fruits, in due Sea-
son; if the Vapours are carried up on High,
and then let fall in kindly and benign Show-
ers to refresh the Earth, and so circulate in a
very beneficial and wonderful Manner; if Corn,
and all the Fruits of the Earth, have in them
what is proper to nourish, strengthen, and re-
fresh the Bodies of Animals, to gratify their
Appetites, to continue and add an Agreeable-
ness to their Lives: and if these Fruits, all in
their proper Season, may be so cultivated, as
to offer Themselves, in a regular yearly Course,
to the Necessities and Conveniencies, of Man:
If the Air be such as he can live and breath in,
adapted to his Lungs, and the Frame of his
Body,

Body; all this is owing to the Government S E R M. of Almighty God; his original and first Decree xx. by which He confined all Things to the Places they are now in, and fixed them in their present Relations and Proportions to one another; and particularly, to his planting the Sun, that immense Collection of Light and Heat, exactly where it might be most subservient to the Wants of that Part of his Creation to which He first ordained it to belong. All is owing to his Wisdom, who at first said, *Let there be Light, Let the Earth bring forth her Increase;* and who by his first Commands constituted the Nature, the Properties, the Place, and the distinct Office, of every Work of his Hands. These, and the like numberless Appearances, regular and orderly, are great and manifest Instances of the Providence, or Government, of God; and therefore may be said to be implied in that Expression, *The Lord reigneth;* and are not only so many wonderful and agreeable Appearances, but, undeniable Demonstrations, that a most knowing, and powerful, and merciful Being presides, and has always presided and ruled, in the Universe.

But then, we must observe farther, that this God not only first constituted all Things, what they are in their Nature, and allotted them their several Places, and assigned them

S E R M. their several Offices; but that He has reserved,
 xx. in his own Hands, the Reins, to moderate
 and manage them as he sees fit: That He is
 not so tied up to the ordinary Methods and
 Causes which he has established, but that He
 sometimes interposes, and interrupts them,
 upon great and remarkable Occasions; and
 shews that He can make the ordinary Course of
 Things yield to his great Designs. Particularly,
 when He has a Religion to propagate in the
 World; a chosen People to deliver; a Nation
 to destroy; a false Religion to shame and con-
 found; He reigns over Nature: and, as He is
 the God of it, He seems to go out of the or-
 dinary Course He himself once settled, to make
 the World of rational Creatures attend, and to
 raise their Thoughts towards *Him*, their Fa-
 ther and King. And this also may be supposed
 to be implied in the Government of God, as
 it respects the material and irrational Part of
 the World.

Let us now consider it, as it respects the ra-
 tional and understanding Part of the Creation.
 And here it is plain, That, when he first en-
 dowed any Beings with Understanding, and a
 Faculty of Knowledge superior to other Ani-
 mals; and gave them, by this Means, a Power
 of answering the higher Ends of his creating
 such Beings; of adorning the Station in which

He should place them; and of imitating Him, whose Existence and Providence They could not but plainly discover: That, I say, this very adorning Them with these Powers, and noble Qualifications, was one Instance of his Government; and so was the placing them, Every One, in his proper Sphere of Action. And because all his Creatures, of the most excellent Sort, are of finite Understandings, and of limited Powers; and particularly, because many of these intelligent Beings, not only Men, but, as it is represented to us in the Holy Scriptures, Angels, or Beings of an higher Rank, have left their proper Stations; and, instead of carrying forward the Beauty of the Whole, and making themselves subservient to the Designs of God, seem to have made it their Busines to resist those Designs; to interpose in the Midst of his Government; to scatter Wickedness wherever they can; and by that to bring Disorder, and Mischief, and Confusion, into the World, by all the Arts and Methods they are Masters of; and even insolently to oppose his Purposes, as far as They can: Therefore, it is a most agreeable Observation, That Almighty God can never be supposed to leave the World to the Management of these Beings of an inferior Rank; but to interpose himself, either immediately, or by the faithful Ministers of

SER M. his Will and Pleasure, to shew that *Power* be-
xx. longs unto him; and that, though He has given
some Measure of Understanding to inferiour
Beings, yet he has not given them the Govern-
ment of the World; nor put into their Hands
the Disposal of the Fortunes of any of their
Fellow-creatures.

He may permit wicked Spirits, and wicked
Men, to plot, and contrive, and lay down their
Schemes to Themselves, by which they hope
to do Mischief in the World: He may permit
them to go on in those wicked Thoughts,
which their own evil and corrupted Natures
suggest to them. But, whether they shall ac-
complish them, and bring them to Effect; whe-
ther they shall succeed, or be disappointed; is re-
served to Him, and remains in his Breast only.
He often laughs at their wretched Contrivances,
and has them in Derision, and overthrows their
whole Projects; and with one Nod, controlls
their Malice, and checks their Designs. He
often infatuates their Counsels; breaths Folly
and Inconsistency upon their Debates, and ap-
parent Imprudence into all their Measures.
And then, They work themselves into Ruine,
and take the most effectual Course to bring on
the Destruction of their own main Purpoſes.
He often permits their abominable Designs to
come to the End which They themſelves wish
and

and propose. But then, this is for some wise S E R M. and good Purpose, He has in his own Eye; for the Punishment of other wicked Persons, or for the Reformation of a wicked People; or for the more conspicuous and terrible Downfal of these very wicked Beings.

He often, by secret and unknown Ways; by a false Friend, or a cunning Enemy; by their own Jealousies, Quarrels, and mutual Animosities; or some more miraculous Method; discovers and prevents their Mischief. And then, they Themselves *fall into the Pit which themselves digged for others*: And the *Mischief they meant for others, falls upon their own Heads*. He often permits them to take every Step they please, and every Chain of their Design to be successful; that, when they come to the End of it, they may see that He governs and overrules even their Wickednes: and be surprised at last to find the Consequence of their Designs so different from what they intended it should be; and such Effects to proceed from their Contrivances, as these Contrivances themselves were thought the only Ways to prevent.

To prove what I have been saying, I will just mention some very remarkable Instances of the *Superintendence* of GOD, in the *Spiritual* and *Temporal* Concerns of his rational Creatures.

S E R M. here below. As to the first sort; Could any
xx. thing, for instance, be more maliciously con-
trived by the worst of Beings, than the igno-
minious Death and Crucifixion of *Christ*,
which was his Plot, when he is said to have
entered into the Heart of *Judas*? And yet,
could any thing be more agreeable to the End
of *Christ's* coming into the World, or the De-
sign of Almighty God, in sending Him? and
therefore, more contrary to the Mind of that
accursed Spirit in bringing it about? Could
any thing be thought of, more adapted to the
Designs of the unbelieving *Jews*, than, after
Jesus was dead, to set a Guard at his Sepul-
chre, lest his Disciples should steal him, and
say he was risen, and his Religion should be
propagated by this Means? And yet, how
were his Enemies over-reached by Providence
in this? This very Circumstance helps to prove
that his Disciples did *not* steal him away; and
therefore, that he truly arose from the Dead;
and therefore, that his Religion is true: and so
they assisted in the propagating his Religion,
whilst they meant to extinguish his very Name
and Memory.

And, in temporal Matters, Could any thing
be more artfully contrived to serve the Je-
alousy and Hatred of *Joseph's* Brethren, than
the felling him into *Egypt*: and yet, what ad-
mirable

mirable Purposes were served by it? *Joseph SERM.*
raised to Honour; a Nation and Family saved xx. from Famine; the Foundation laid for the visible Displaying of God's Glory, in all his wonderful Dispensations towards the People of the *Jews*; in his bringing them out of Slavery, and separating them from all the World about them.

But I need not go far for more Examples of this Truth, in the Concerns of this World. This Day furnishes us with one as surprising and as remarkable as any to be met with in Civil History. Who that lived in the late unhappy Times of Confusion, that accompanied and followed the Civil War; Who that saw that State of Things, and how many Barriers there were set against the Restoration of the ancient Form; and how deeply Multitudes were engaged in private Interest, and in private Revenge, to resist every thing tending that way; — Who that knew these Things, I say, could have thought of that which afterwards happened? And yet, notwithstanding all the Contrivances of the most politick, and all the Care of the wisest Heads, by a wonderful Providence, the ancient Form of Government, and that very Form which we now so much glory in, was restored with the greatest Quiet imaginable, to the great Surprize both of

SER M. Those who wished it, of Those who opposed it.
xx: fed it.

I have now done with the *first* Head. And I hope, it has sufficiently appeared, from what I have said under it, what is implied in the Affirmation, *The Lord reigneth*; and, at the same Time, how strong the Argument is, that the settled Order, and regular Disposition, of all the Parts of the World about us; the Excellencies of his Rational Creatures, and the Great Events, with regard to *Them*; plainly declare the Care and Government of a most perfect Being over us; and that, *where* there are all the Marks and Characters of Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness, *there* Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, ought to be acknowledged. And indeed, if we pursue the Subject a little farther, what can be more reasonable than to argue, That, as GOD first created us, and brought us into being, and placed us in this State; so, He did by that contract the Relation of a *Father* to us, and with it all the Obligation of Care, and Provision, and tender Regard, that result from thence — That He, who thus brought Creatures into Being, to make them happy, still wishes their Happiness; That He, who is perfect in Knowledge, cannot help knowing their Necessities; that He, who is perfect

perfect in Goodness, is most ready to supply S E R M. them; and that He, who is perfect in Power, xx. is able to do whatever he pleases for them: and that therefore, He will not forsake or reject them, 'till they have rejected Him: --- Especially, since there is a wicked Part of his Creatures designing Misery and Ruine to the other, who are not always able to provide against it? For surely, we cannot be mistaken in this, which appears so evident, that a perfect Being cannot make Worlds of Creatures to sport with their Misfortunes; or to leave them to the Mercy of any inferior wicked Beings: and that God, who makes no Creatures out of the Reach of his own Knowledge, or Power, must be supposed to govern what He creates. For, that He is concerned for them, is plain from his bringing them into Being: and, if He be concerned for their Happiness, it is absurd to say that He doth not exercise a paternal Providence over them.

II. But I must now proceed to the other main Point, which I propos'd, plainly implied in the Text, *viz.* That we have all the reason in the World to rejoice, and to be perfectly satisfied, under the Consideration of such a Providence ruling over this World, or under the Thought,

S E R M. Thought, that the *Lord reigneth. The Lord xx. reigneth, let the Earth rejoice.* And,

First, How happy is it for us, that this World, and every Thing in it, was constituted and ordered, and is still governed, by God, *i. e.* by perfect Wisdom, Goodness, and Power? How can we imagine the Nature of Things, the Stations in which they are settled, the Courses of the celestial Bodies, the Succession of the Seasons, the Fruits of the Earth, the Qualities of them, the Bodies of Animals, better contrived and ordered, with respect to Ourselves, and the Sphere we are to act in, and the Ends of our Life here? What Failures, and Errors, and Irregularities, might we justly imagine and expect; nay, What mischievous and pernicious Blunders, did any Being of less than perfect Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness, preside over this World, and administer the Government of it? Here, indeed, appears the perfect Satisfaction we ought to have in the Thought of such a supreme Governour; when we know and consider, that, as Nothing is out of the Reach of infinite Knowledge, so Nothing can happen, in all the vast Universe of Beings, but what such a Being is aware of: That, as no Instance of Benignity, and the tenderest Love, is too low for infinite Goodness; so such a Being must ever be dispos'd to all Acts of Benevolence

fidence and Kindness to his Creatures: and S E R M. that, as nothing is too difficult for infinite Power, so such a Being must be able to do for his Offspring whatever his Goodness represents them to stand in Need of, and his Wisdom knows fitting to be done, and becoming his Perfections, and their Situation: That Nothing doth or can happen to them, amidst all the Changes and Chances they are subject to, but what a most wise Being judges proper, either to order, or permit, to come upon them; as Nothing can be designed against them, but what He has Power to prevent, if He pleases; and as this Power is accompanied with perfect Goodness, and the tenderest Regard to his Creatures. But, what I am now saying, will further appear, by considering,

Secondly, What a great Unhappiness it would be to us, were we left to our own Management, and the Reins of Government put into our own Hands. Many are apt to think that, if they had the Disposal of Themselves, of their own Fortunes, and of all that belongs to them, they should entirely consult their Happiness, and secure their good Estate for ever: but very unjustly and unreasonably, as they would find to their cost, if God should be so unmerciful to them, as to take them at their Word, and put them from under his own Jurisdiction, and

S E R M. and make them to be the Framers of their own
xx. Fortunes. Such finite and imperfect Creatures as we are, see but a little Way. We can sometimes perhaps discern one Side of Things, and sometimes may guess right at the Consequences of them. But all our Knowledge that Way is but Guess at best; and is confined within a Compass that takes not in half the Circumstances of Things, that ought to be considered, before we should determine our Wishes and Prayers. And we are not only imperfect, and of a short and finite View; but we are passionate, educated with Prejudices, corrupted by evil Habits; often strongly inclined to Considerations on one Side, and averse to any (tho' never so plain, and never so material) on the other. And what excellent Governours we should be of our Selves, and of our own Fortunes, is plain. And again, what strange Confusion and Disorder must follow, were every other Man his own Master, as we desire to be in our own Case; and as He has the same Right to wish to be in *His*: whilst our several Designs, and Lusts, and Passions, must perpetually be clashing, and always annoying, disturbing, and confounding one another? Happy therefore, is it for us, that we have it not in our Power, so often as we please, to ruine Ourselves, and disorder the World about us! And very happy is

it for us, that perfect Wisdom, Goodness, and ^{S E R M.} Power, preside over us, to deny us what is not ^{xx.} fit for us ; to afford us what is proper for us ; and to deliver us from the Effects of our own Follies and Passions !

And then, *Thirdly*, as it is an Happiness to be out of our own Jurisdiction, and exempt from our own Management; so ought it likewise to be a great Satisfaction to us, that we are not left to the Will and Government of other Beings, of an inferiour Rank; to the Mercy of that Part of the intelligent Creation, that have thrown off the Laws of God, and are always designing Mischief to their Fellow-creatures ; and, as far as they can, helping forward the Ruine of all the World about them : whilst the Innocent are at rest, without Suspicion and without Fear. How much Misery, and Disorder, and Confusion would They bring about, were there only the good Part of the World to oppose their Designs, to detect their Contrivances, and resist their Power ? How much Ruine would they joyfully be the Authors of, did not *the Lord reign*, and protect his Servants from their Rage ? And how often would they procure, and bring about, the Desolation of Nations, and Societies, and Families, did not an All-seeing Eye interpose to disclose their Arts ; and

an

SER M. an Almighty Arm, to resist and controll their
xx. Power?

How great Reason therefore, has every Man, and every Nation, and Society, to rejoice that the Providence of God leaves them not to the Contrivances of ill-disposed and malevolent Beings; and on this Account to *rejoice that the Lord reigneth*, that He has reserved the Government of them, and the Disposal of their Fortune and Estate, in his own Hands so, as to controll the Malice, and deliver them from the Power, of their Enemies; and to hinder all wicked Beings from triumphing in the Ruine of the Souls and Bodies of their Fellow-creatures?

Thus have I finished what I designed at this Time. *First*, I have shewn, what we may suppose to be implied in these Words, *The Lord reigneth*: And observed what was sufficient to prove the Truth of this Proposition. And *Secondly*, I have shewn the great Reason we have to rejoice, and be entirely satisfied, that *the Lord reigneth*. And now, let us reap some Benefit from what has been said, and not let so noble and useful a Subject pass by us, without those Advantages it so plainly brings along with it.

If the Lord be truly the Disposer and Gover-nour of this World of Creatures which he at first created;

created; if He presides over it with a watch-^{S E R M.}
ful and careful Eye; let the Consideration of xx.
this fill us with Peace and Quiet within,
and entire Resignation to his Will and Plea-
sure. To whom can we submit, and in
whose Disposals can we acquiesce, if not in
the Disposals of perfect Wisdom and Good-
ness? If *the Lord reigns*, and Nothing can
happen to us but by his Decree or Permis-
sion; let us rest satisfied, that all the united
Force of evil Spirits and wicked Men shall
not be able to hurt us, unless He thinks fit,
it should be so. And be our Circumstances
what they will, and our Case in appearance ne-
ver so desperate, let the Thought of such a
Governour, and such a King of Heaven and
Earth, comfort and compose our Hearts; the
Thought that He that administers our Affairs
is knowing, and wise, and good, to an infi-
nite Degree; is most ready and willing to do
us Good, and is powerful enough to free us
from all Evil, if it be best for us. If God be
for us; if his Eye be over us every where; it
imports little, Who is against us. And as He
will always be for them that truly fear him;
then, *the Sun shall not smite them by Day, nei-*
ther the Moon by Night, for he is the God and
Governour of Nature; *They shall not be afraid*
for the Arrow that flieth by Day, nor for the
Pestilence

S E R M. *Pestilence that walketh in Darkness, nor for the xx. Destruction that wasteth at Noon-day:* for all the Instruments of Death are in his Hand, and under his Direction. *The Lord shall preserve them from all Evil, he shall preserve their Souls.*

These are some of the Psalmist's pious Thoughts upon this Subject; and some of the general Assurances the Holy Scriptures give to good Men.

And now, to apply what has been said more particularly; Let publick Societies rejoice, in a peculiar Manner, that *the Lord reigneth*; that, amidst all the Dangers that threaten them, they are the Care of an almighty and wise Providence; that, whilst contending Parties within them are pursuing their own particular Interests, and tearing in pieces the very Bands of all Happiness; and whilst powerful Enemies, without them, are threatening and contriving their Destruction; that, in such Circumstances, in which the Wisdom and Power of Men often fail, an infallible Pilot sits at the Helm; an all-seeing and gracious Eye watches and observes every thing that can happen; and an almighty and tender Hand directs and determines every Event, as it is best and fittest it should be, all things considered.

But

But I should be unjust to the joyful Occa-^{S E R M.}
sion of this Day, and to the Reason of my ap- xx.
pearing here at this Time, if I should not take 
more particular Notice of the great Reason we
of this Nation have to rejoice, on every Re-
turn of this Day, that *the Lord reigneth*. For
we are now met together to commemorate be-
fore God, one of the most surprizing Dispен-
sations of his Providence towards us; the Res-
toration of the Royal Family, and with it the
Restoration of our ancient Form of Govern-
ment that had long been banished from Us,—
That Excellent Form of Government, so
happily tempered between the Extremes of
Lawless Power, and Lawless Confusion, as if
it had been the Effect of a Consultation be-
tween the greatest Politicians, and the wisest
Heads in the World;—That envied Constitu-
tion, in which the Commands of the Prince,
and the Obedience of the Subjects, are equal-
ly regulated by Laws, and Both secured from
all those Unhappinesses that attend some Sorts
of Government, as long as the one is so wise
as to enjoin nothing but what the Laws enjoin;
and the other so honest as to make a Conscience
of obeying the Dictates of those Laws—And,
what is more to Us, That Constitution which
we yet, by the wonderful Goodness of God, en-
joy, and upon which We are every Day con-

F f gratulating

ER M. gratulating our own Happiness. Such was the
xx. Blessing of this Day, in its Design, and natural
Consequence: and such the Reason We have to rejoice that *the Lord reigneth.*

What use was made of it, and what were the immediate Returns to Heaven for it, I do not willingly say, but would gladly draw a Veil over them, if they could be hid. But it is too plain that they were agreeable to our usual Gratitude to Heaven; and too evident to be dissembled, that a mighty Torrent of Vice came with Violence into the Land, with these mighty Blessings; that Men shewed their Thankfulness to God, not by the Integrity and Sobriety of their Lives, but by the highest Flights and Transports of Debauchery; that they shewed their Zeal against that Hypocrisy which, they complained, had defiled the Land, by open Profaneness; and their Loyalty to the King, by forgetting the God, by whom Kings reign; and that many of them took occasion, from the Miseries that had followed the Overthrow of this Government, to use their best Endeavours to transform it into an absolute and arbitrary Tyranny. Indeed, these gross Abuses of so gracious a Providence reflect only a Dishonour upon those, who had so little Ingenuity as to be guilty of them. But they do not at all diminish the Blessing that Heaven designed

ed for this Nation. We Ourselves feel the ~~S E R M.~~ benign Influence of it at this very Day, in the ~~xx.~~ quiet Enjoyment of our Lives and Properties, under that Legal Government which it restored; and which We still enjoy, in a manner never perhaps before experienced.

May We all, by Gratitude itself, be induced to live so, as to reflect Honour upon the God who has thus regarded us; and may We, in a Sense of the Happiness we enjoy, all of us, in our several Stations, use our utmost Endeavours to transmit the same Happiness secure to our Posterity; by guarding it against such as think Mankind fit for nothing but the Chains of Slavery; and also by paying a chearful and conscientious Obedience to the Legislative and Executive Power, now so happily settled, and in so excellent a Manner administered, amongst Us.

Which God grant, &c.

SERMON XXI.

Preached at the Church of St. Peter's Poor, on
the publick Fast-day, 1709.

ACTS vii. latter Part of Ver. 26.

*Sirs, ye are Brethren, why do ye Wrong One to
Another.*

TERM. **T**HESSE are the Words of *Moses*, by
xxi. which he endeavoured to reconcile
two of his Brethren, of the Children
of *Israel*, who were quarrelling and striving
with one another. This was not the first In-
stance he had given them of his Regard to their
true and real Interest; and of his Readiness to
do his Nation the greatest Service he was ca-
pable of doing: for it was but the Day before
that he had defended one of his Brethren a-
gainst the Insults and Violence of a barbarous
Egyptian, and delivered him out of his Hands;
by

by this means giving them a Presage of that great S E R M. Deliverance which God would, e're long, bring about by Him. But *Moses*, whilst he hoped they would immediately close with this friendly Design, and unanimously accept of his Advice and Proposals, met with the common Fate of almost all who pretend either to be Deliverers of the Oppressed, or Reconcilers of the contending and quarrelling Parts of Mankind. For the *Israelites*, though they were of the same Nation and Family, linked together by the Ties of the same Religion and Profession, involved in the same common Slavery, Fellow-sufferers in the same Barbarities and Cruelties, and surrounded by the same common Enemies; yet, could not only find Time to abuse, and quarrel with, one another, but affronted and abused their best Friend and Adviser, only because he persuaded them to a mutual Love and Concord; and to avoid those intestine Diffensions and Quarrels which would inevitably weaken their common Interest, and obstruct all Hopes of their future Prosperity. Indeed, we do not read that, after he had completed their Deliverance, and was taken from them, there were any amongst them so insensible of the Benefits he had conferred upon them, as to pursue his Memory with Affronts and Indignities. Such Ingratitude was reserv-

SERM. ed for later Times. As to *Moses*; after His
xxi. Death we hear of Nothing but the Celebra-
tion of his Praises, the most grateful Ac-
knowledgments imaginable offered at every
Remembrance of Him, and all but Divine
Honours paid to his Name. But, as I ob-
served, whilst he lived amongst them, they
treated him ungratefully upon every Occasion :
And here, at the Beginning of his Regard to
them, and whilst he was preparing them, by
his good Advice, for Freedom and Happiness,
the Person whom he would have persuaded
to Justice and Peace, instead of thanking him
for his good Offices, endeavoured to touch
even his Life,

There is something in this so applicable to
Ourselves, that I could not but think it pro-
per and seasonable for us to spend some of our
serious Thoughts upon this Expostulation of
Moses in the Text. We are divided and tor'n
to pieces, by our mutual Hatreds, and intes-
tine Heats, by our shameful Divisions and un-
christian Tempers: Few amongst Us care to
hear of Love and Friendship; but will even
revile the Man that but speaks to them of
Peace: whilst in the mean while all acknow-
ledge that it is the want of this mutual Love,
and the Hatred which flourishes in the room
of it, to which we shall owe our common Ru-
ine,

ine, whenever it comes upon us. What can ~~S E R M.~~
one think, but that there must be a secret In-
fatuation from above, upon the Minds of ~~the~~
Men; a fatal Blindness, to which God has
given us over, when we see so much Danger
from our own Animosities and Heats, and
have not the Heart to consult our own Securi-
ty; when we read and hear of so many Nations
and Commonwealths, destroyed and laid
waste by mutual Hatreds and intestine Quar-
rels, and yet cherish the same Evils amongst
Ourselves, which we are sensible have hastened
the Ruine of so many Nations before us? In
these deplorable Circumstances no good
Man, who has the least Concern for the com-
mon Welfare, can hinder his Thoughts from
running out upon all the possible Methods of
putting a stop to this growing Evil, and pre-
venting the fatal and natural Consequences of
it.

In speaking upon this Subject it is not my
Design, at present, to observe what Advances
might be made towards accommodating our
Differences, by Persons in the highest Stations:
for I am sensible to how little purpose that
might be, at this Time, and in this Place.
But I shall endeavour to offer such Observati-
ons and Considerations as concern every private
Christian, and come within the reach of every

S E R M. Member of the Commonwealth, and that in
xxii. this following Method.

First, I shall shew what is the Duty of every *Christian* in those Differences, which thus distract Us.

Secondly, What are the great Hindrances to that Brotherly Love, and mutual Friendship and Agreement, which are so very necessary. And,

Thirdly, I shall urge the great and weighty Motives we have, at this Time, to pursue Peace, and Union, amongst Ourselves.

I. Let us examine what is the Duty of every *Christian* in those Differences which thus distract us. And this I think may be comprehended in two Particulars ;

First, It is the Part of every good Man to endeavour, by all the Methods of *Christianity*, to reconcile the contending Parties in the World; and, in the Spirit of Meekness, to convince the Judgments of those whom he imagines to be in any material Error. No Peace or Union can be so lasting, as that which is the Consequence of Men's being of one Mind, and of one Heart; of the same Opinions, and of the same Sentiments, in Matters of any Concern. There is something in Human Nature which is

is delighted with the Agreement of others in S E R M.
our own Notions; and there is something in xxi.
the weak Part of it, that cannot always ~~ever~~
bear with a Difference and Diversity of Opini-
on. This Difference often brings on Disputes
and Discourse; and Argument often produces
Heat and Violence; and such Flames are seen
to break forth, as would not have been, had
there been an Agreement. So that it must be
owned, it would be an incredible Happiness to
Human Society, as it is seen to be in any Fa-
mily, for Men to be of one Mind, and to have
the same Notions and Opinions. Not that I
think there is any ground to hope for such an
Happiness. In the past Ages, it never has
been experienced, or seen; nor can it be much
hoped for, or expected, by wise Men, in the
later Ages of the World. I am sure, the
Passions of Men are at too great an Height,
to give us any Foundation for thinking of
any such Happiness in our Days. But still, it
may be right for us to labour, and do our
Part towards it, tho' we reap not all the Suc-
cess, and see not all the good Effects of it, we
could wish: The little we can do, every one
of us in our own Sphere, may serve to com-
pose the troubled Waters about us; and may
prove, in time, a Foundation for a more ge-
neral and universal Agreement. And there-
fore,

S E R M. fore, it is not the Improbability of effecting
xxi. this that ought to affrighten us from attempt-
ing to bring all to the Acknowledgment of the
same Truths which we acknowledge and em-
brace ; provided always that in doing this, and
in the Methods we pursue in order to do it, we
break in upon no moral Duty, and no
Command of our holy Religion. If we do, we
shall be sure to cast more Scandal upon it, and
do more Mischief by our Practice, than any
such Agreement, even in true Opinions,
can do good ; nay, we shall rather be sure
never to effect this Agreement, to any good
Purpose, But,

Secondly, It is the Part of every good
Man, amidst, and after, all his Endeavours
to reconcile the Opinions of Men to one an-
other, in what He thinks right, to love and
bear with his Brethren, tho' they be not mov-
ed by his Arguments ; tho' they cannot be per-
suaded, by what He perhaps may judge to be
the plainest and most convincing Reasons, to
alter their Minds ; nay, tho' they return him
Reproaches and Abuses for his good Design to-
wards them. For, until that happy Day
comes that Men be all of one Mind, (which
whether it will ever come, or no, God alone
knows,) this is the only way to procure or pre-
serve Peace and Quietness in the World ; and,
indeed,

indeed, seems to be a more glorious Instance S E R M. of Good-nature and Religion, than any that can be practised without such a Difference in Opinion. For to love Those who agree with us in every thing ; to embrace Those whose Opinions fall in with ours in every thing, is no considerable Reach in Religion ; nor any mighty Proof of a Person's Candour or Humility. But to love, and bear with, and make Allowances for, Those who differ from us, and whose Notions are at a wide distance from ours ; to be ready to condescend to These, and to do them all Good Offices, this is truly great and glorious. There is some Temptation to the contrary, something in the Pride and Passion of Human Nature contradictory to this, which makes it much more honourable, and a much higher Instance of Goodness.

And it is worthy of our most serious Notice, that it is a Temper of Mind that resembles Almighty God, and is an Imitation of that divine Copy ; and therefore must be most acceptable to Him. How wide are most of our Notions from his, and at what a distance, too often, do our Opinions of Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, stand from his ; and how opposite are our Practices to his Will ? And yet, He hath loved us, and borne with us, and made Allowances for our Weaknesses and Infirmities : and

S E R M. and still invites us to all the Happiness we are
xxi. capable of, notwithstanding this. And is it not
fit that we should shew Ourselves as placable,
as willing to make Allowances, as loving, as
condescending and good to Those who differ
from us, as the great God of Heaven and
Earth has shewn himself to us? *If you love
those who agree with you in all things, and whose
Opinions are the same with your own; what
praise have ye? Do not even the Publicans and
Sinners do the same?* But if ye love, and bear
with, Those who differ from you, and who
contradict and oppose you in their Notions;
then it is, that your Love and Good-nature
exceeds the Good-nature and Love of Men of
other Professions; then it is, that you come
up to the Perfection of *Christian Love*; and
then it is, that you may expect a great Reward;
because then it is that you are the Children of
your Father which is in Heaven, who hath
dealt with you exactly as he would have you
deal with one another.

Nay, and besides the Obligation to this
mutual Love and Forbearance, amidst our Dif-
ferences, arising from the Glory of the Practice,
and the Example of God, one may say that
nothing in the World could so effectually, in
the End, put an end to these Differences them-
selves, as the Practice of this Love. For it is
apparent

apparent that nothing puts so great a stop to S E R M. Agreement in Sentiments, as the Provocations given and received; the Passions, and the Pride ~~of~~ of Men, with regard to their several Opinions. And therefore, tho' we differ mightily at present, yet, could Men but be persuaded to the Exercise of this mutual Candour and Forbearance; were there Conscience made of doing all good Offices to all Sorts; this Good-nature would have, without Doubt, a very visible Effect; and the Tempers of Men would become disposed to think and wish for such an Agreement, as Passion, and a lofty Behaviour makes them now averse to; and mutual Forbearance would very much dispose things towards that universal Agreement in Matters of Concern, which is so agreeable to Human Nature, and so conducive to the Peace of Human Society: there being nothing that hinders such an Agreement, so much as Personal Prejudices; and nothing that removes Personal Prejudices so much as the constant Practice of this Love and Good-nature.

Thus much, about the Duty of every *Christian*, in the midst of those Differences that distract us. And the two Instances I have mentioned, are such as lye within the Reach of every private Person, and what All Men may practise.

S E R M. II. I come now to consider, as I proposed, xxi. in the *Second* place, what are the great Hindrances to that mutual Love and Good-nature, which cannot but be acknowledged to be so highly useful and necessary. And of these I shall speak but very briefly, because few can bear to hear of them: and I had rather suppose all Men heartily disposed to Union, than that any Persons concerned are guilty of what must hinder it. But I think it plain, that the greatest Hindrances to it, are, the Spirit of Pride, and Inflexibility in our own Thoughts, and our own Ways; and of personal Hatred and Prejudice towards Others, in their Differences, from Us: and in some, the View to Ambition or private Interest. And these, indeed, with the artful Management of our common Adversaries, and the Weakness of some honest Men, are the great Hindrances and Bars to that Happiness which only can be effected by mutual *Love*, and *Benevolence*.

The Spirit of Pride leads Men to think that they are always in the right; and that it is more becoming, and reasonable that the whole World should conform to their Notions and Opinions, than that they should descend to the least Compliance with the World about them. And so long as this Temper flourishes, it is an Absurdity

Absurdity to think of Peace or Union. The S E R M. Spirit of personal Hatred, or Party Prejudice, xxi. disposes Men to think, that Nothing can be ~~right~~ right or well meant, that is proposed by some Persons; and that Nothing can be too hard a Burthen to lay upon those of whom they have conceived a hard Opinion; and that Nothing ought to soften them into the least Condescension to them. The Spirit of Worldly-mind-edness, and Self-interest, makes Men averse to all such Agreement and Union, unless it can be shewn, that it is for their own particular immediate Advantage; and, lest it should prove, at last, a Bar in their Way, and an Obstacle to their worldly Projects and Designs; by lessening, or ruining, their Interest, Power, and Influence, in the World. And if you join to these the artful Management of common Adversaries, you will, perhaps, have as good an account as can be given, why any Nations or Societies have been ruined by Discord; and why that Unity, which is so necessary to the Preservation of the Whole, has been often prevented and hindered by any particular Members of the Whole. As for Ourselves; you know that our Adversaries, the common Adversaries of our Religion and Liberties, want not for Cunning and Worldly Wisdom. They never drop, even for a Moment, the View of their Cause; and are constantly applying

S E R M. ing themselves to the different Humours, and
xxi. Passions, and Inclinations, of Men; and spend
the Force of their Minds, to improve the Pride
of Some, the evil Temper of Others, the
Worldly-mindedness of Others, to their own
Purposes. They encrease the Evil, and add
Fuel to the Fire, which they hope will at last
consume us; and, while good and sincere Men
are not aware of it, the Enemy comes, and
sows the Tares of Discord and Diffension, in
such Ground as is supposed to be proper for
them.

I come now, in the *Third Place*, to urge the
great and weighty Motives we have to pursue
this universal Love and Concord. And,

First, We are of the same Nation, and live
under the same Government; and, consequent-
ly, have the same Civil Rights and Privileges:
a Consideration, which has always been account-
ed a very strict Bond of Union amongst Men.
And these Civil Rights, and Privileges, are such
as few Nations enjoy; a Happiness, which pro-
ceeds from a Government so excellently tem-
pered between Arbitrary Power, and Confu-
sion, and Disorder. And then, We are of the
same Religion, as to the main and fundamental
Parts of it; and the Profession of This, in Peace
and Quietness, is deeply concerned in the Ar-

gument. And this *Religion*, such as few, even S E R M. of the *Christian Nations* in the World, enjoy; xxi. Reformed from the grossest Abuses and Misrepresentations of superstitious Men; and rendered plain and useful, subservient to the Purposes of a good Life, and spiritual Worship; for which it was at first designed by its great Founder. It is the Enjoyment of those Civil Rights, and the free Exercise of this holy and pure Religion, that so happily distinguish us from many other Parts of the *Christian World*. So that from hence it appears, that we have the same common Advantages and Interest to enjoy, if we be so happy as to preserve ourselves in our present State; and, on the contrary, the same irreparable Loss to sustain in these two invaluable Goods, if we go on to carry forward the Work of our Enemies, by our Discord and Divisions at Home. And what can link us together in the Bands of Love, and in the amicable Prosecution of the same Designs, if a Sense of our Happiness, both as we are of this Nation, and of this Religion, will not? If such Civil Rights and Privileges, such a free Enjoyment of what is our own, such a Liberty in the Worship of God, and the Exercise of our Religion, be not valuable and dear to us, what is it that we can value? To be governed by Laws, and not by a single Will, and an arbitrary

S E R M. Power; to be secure in the Possession of our
xxi. Properties; to be happy in the Freedom of our
Bodies and Estates; and, above all, to be
happy in the Freedom of our Services, and
to be secure in the Performance of our
Duties to God, and to one another: These
are Advantages above any Price; such as we
should envy in any other Nation; the greatest
Blessings this World can know; and such
as we should never enough admire, were it not
that they are grown old, and that we have been
too much used to them: So ungrateful are we,
that what should recommend them to us, really
helps to sink their Price in our Opinions,
and to make us loath and undervalue them.
But if the Enjoyment of these common Blessings
cannot move us to that Love and Concord
which are necessary to preserve them, let us,
in the

Second Place, be allarmed a little, by considering, that We have the same deplorable Calamities to expect, unless we jointly endeavour to prevent them, by an universal and sincere Unity. For as, on the one hand, the common Happinesses we now enjoy are very great: so, on the other hand, the Loss, we shall in common sustain, of our Civil Liberties, and the Exercise of our Religion, must be very great, and irreparable; if our Animosities and Hatreds still

still go on to make a way for those Adversaries, S E R M.
who watch for nothing so much as the Opportunity
of entering through our Breaches. And not only this have we to fear; but, what is still worse, the positive Evils of That miserable State of things, directly opposite to the Present, which must succeed.

XXI.

The Enemy that threatens us, cannot be supposed to prevail over us, but that his Maxims of Government must prevail also. And as this is a most deplorable, and almost insupportable, Civil Calamity; so what we are to expect, as we are *Protestants*, is more so: for the other might be supportable, were it qualified and lessened by the free Liberty of our holy Religion. But what Miseries are we not to expect when this Liberty is denied us, and we are called upon to profess a Religion which we cannot in Conscience approve of? And yet there is no Hope of its being otherwise, if the common Enemy prevails. For it has appeared, beyond all Contradiction, that no Oaths or Obligations have ever kept Those of that Religion, whenever they have Power, from extirpating and putting an end to the *Protestant* Name. And indeed, I see not how any of Them could answer it to their Religion, and to their Church, if they did not. For, whatever some of that Religion would fain persuade the Poor and

S E R M. Ignorant amongst us to believe, in order to
xxi. seduce them from it, or make them more
favorable to it; it is notorious, from all
their public Declarations, their greatest Wri-
ters, and their constant Practice, that they are
obliged, (by their Principles,) to put an End
to the *Protestant* Name, and destroy it from
under Heaven, if they can. How great then
are the common Calamities we are to expect,
if we join our own Quarrels with our Adver-
saries Designs against us, when it is impossible
to suppose that they are at all deviated from
their former Practices or Principles; impossi-
ble to think that the Reformation is not still
as much hated as ever amongst them; and that
still they account it lawful and commendable
to exercise the utmost Barbarities towards All,
who will not publickly profess and exercise
their superstitious and unchristian Religion.
Certainly, such Motives as these are of Weight
enough to move even the hardest Heart, that
has any Sense in it of our present Happiness;
or any Belief of the Religion professed amongst
us.

Last of all, as for our own Sakes, so for God's
Sake, and for the Sake of that Name by which
we are called, let us lay to Heart our Divisions
and mutual Animosities; and let us all do our
Endeavour to put some stop to them, and to
introduce

introduce Love and Concord in their Place: s E R M. that our holy Religion be not blasphemed thro' xxi. us; and that our Lord may be glorified in the ~~the~~ universal Practice of that Love, which He came down from Heaven to plant in the World.

Which God grant, &c.

S E R M O N XXII.

Preached at St. Peter's Poor, on the publick
Fast-day, 1711-12.

DEUTERON. xxxii. 29.

*O that They were wise, that They understood this,
that They would consider their latter End !*

S E R M. XXII. **T**HE Words, I have now read to you, are the pathetical and moving Wish of God himself, about the People of *Israel*. *O that They were wise, that They understood this, that They would consider their latter End !* Some Interpreters, indeed, understand them to refer to the Enemies of *Israel*, who were spoken of, in the Verse before. But it seems to me much more probable, that these, and the following Words also, belong to the Children of *Israel*; and express, (agreeably to the

the main Design of this whole Song, of which S E R M. they are a Part,) the great Desire that Almighty God had, to make them an happy and glorious Nation; and likewise, what it was that He expected from Them themselves, in order to this. That they refer to the Interest of a whole Nation, is certain: and therefore, tho' the Death of particular Persons may be called their *latter End*, and often expressed, in the common way of Speaking, by that Phrase; and, tho' this *Text* may be applied to That, considered by itself, and separated from the rest of this Chapter: yet, it is plain that it has no Relation, as it stands here, to the Death of particular Persons, but refers wholly to the *latter End of Nations*, or the final Ruine of whole Societies. Almighty *God* therefore doth, in this Verse (after the most pathetical Manner, amongst Men, of expressing the Desires of their Hearts) wish that the People of *Israel* were *wise*, *i. e.* That they had such a Wisdom, as would direct and move them to Every thing proper and necessary, in order to their own Preservation and Happiness. He wishes that they *understood this*; which seems to mean the Method in which he deals with *Nations*; and, in other Words, that they would *consider their latter End*, or, how certain their *End* will be, if They will not behave themselves as

S E R M. the great Governour of the World expects ;
xxii. and that they would *so* consider this, as to be
moved, by this Consideration, to the Performance
of all those Conditions which are necessary,
on their own Part, to the preventing
their Ruine, and establishing their Prosperity.
And then it follows, (Verse 30.) *How should
One chase a Thousand, and Two put Ten thou-
sand to flight, except their Rock had sold them,
and the Lord had shut them up ; — i. e.* What a
glorious Current of Success should they have,
in all their lawful Enterprizes against their En-
emies, unless God should put a stop to it him-
self ; and sell them into their Enemies Hands,
and into a base Captivity, for the sake of their
foolish and wicked Behaviour, and their un-
grateful Returns for all those extraordinary Fa-
vours bestowed upon them by *Him*, and by his
peculiar Providence ?

These Words, thus explained, you see, di-
rect every Man, who is a Member of any Na-
tion, or Society, to consider himself as such :
not always to regard only his own private and
personal Concerns ; but often to have in his
Thoughts the Relation he bears to others a-
round him, and what is required of him, as he
is a Part of that *Whole*, in the Welfare of which,
He himself, and all his own Posterity, and
that of all around Him, are nearly concerned.

This,

This, I say, it becomes us all frequently to ~~S E R M.~~ consider, and especially upon such Occasions, xxii. as That which has now called us together. And ~~as~~ to this End, the Words before us are very proper, as they naturally lead us to the following Observations :

I. That God doth truly desire the Prosperity and Happiness of Nations and Societies of Men.

II. That his Desire of their Prosperity doth not induce Him to make them happy, without their own joint Assistance ; but that He expects their own Wisdom, and their best Endeavours, to concur with Him. And,

III. That the Consideration of that *latter End*, and Dissolution, which *Nations* must expect, if they go on to displease God ; and of those Rules by which he acts, in his Dealings with Societies, ought to be of great Force to engage Us to consult our own Security and Prosperity, in those Methods which He has laid before Us ; particularly, by forsaking those *Vices*, which otherwise must be our Ruine.

I. Let us observe, for our own great Satisfaction, that Almighty *God* is truly concerned for the Welfare of all public Societies and Nations. Far be it from us to suppose, that He ever

SERM. ever wholly confined his Love and tender Regards, or pathetic Wishes of Happiness, to the ~~the~~ Jewish Nation ; tho' he selected them out of the whole Earth, as his own People, for the good Purposes of his Providence. His remarkable Punishment of the Jewish Nation, when their Behaviour called for it ; and, at last, ruining their whole Polity, and the Fabric of their Commonwealth ; and his waiting upon *other Nations*, to see whether they would repent or not ; and his deferring their Destruction 'till they were past all Hopes : These *Particulars*, recorded of old, of His Methods of dealing with Nations, may assure us, that He has the same tender Desire of the Welfare of *All Nations*, which He had for That of the *Jews* ; and that He is as truly concerned for the Happiness of *other Nations*, as ever he was for Those whom He called *His own People*. He is the Creator of *all Men*, and the great Governour of *all Nations*. *All* have a Title to his Providence, and fatherly Care ; and *All* must be dear in his Eyes, 'till they have made themselves otherwise. It appears from the *Sacred History*, That, if *Abraham* and his Family had been as impious, and as corrupted, as the other Families and Nations of the Earth, God would not have chosen *Him*, and his *Posterity*, out of all the World,

as his peculiar *People*. And that, by this Choice, ~~S E R M.~~ ~~xxii.~~ He did not mean to signify his exempting that ~~xxii.~~ *People* from the *general* Rule of his Favour ~~and~~ and Displeasure, towards *all* Nations, is most evident from his totally forsaking Them, and destroying even their Appearance, as a *Nation*, for the very same Reasons, for which He had heretofore cast out and destroyed *other Nations*, for *their Sake*: viz. *because their Iniquities were full.*

This, therefore, must be a mighty Satisfaction, that, whereas the Lords and Tyrants of this Earth often take a Delight in overturning, and confounding Families, and States, and Kingdoms, when their Projects require it, there sits a God on high, able and wise, to overrule their Power and Cunning; who delights not in Destruction and Desolation; whose Almighty Power is chiefly displayed in shewing Mercy; and whose Delight it is to do Good to the Children of Men. And, well might the *Psalmist*, upon Consideration of this, cry out, *Why boastest thou thyself thou Tyrant, that thou canst do Mischief? whereas the Goodness of God endureth yet daily; i. e. How can you, the Tyrants of this World, pride yourselves in that Misery and Ruine which you can scatter around you; when you have the Example of God before your Eyes, who is infinitely exalted above you,*

S E R M. you, and cloathed with infinite Degrees of
xxii. Power more than you are acquainted with :

~~~~~ And yet, *his Goodness endureth daily*; and yet  
*He* delights, not in destroying but, in saving; not in striking Terror upon the *Nations* of the *Earth*, but in shovring down his Blessings upon them? Did the proud, and ambitious, and insatiable Lords of this Earth but consider this; what a stop must it put to all the Madnesses of their Power, here below? How few Scenes of Blood and Desolation? how few Countries depopulated and laid waste? how few Barbarities exercised? how few Families banished and extirpated? how few Towns laid in Ashes? and how few Instances of any thing like Violence, or Brutality, should we see or hear of? But, because this lovely Pattern of the most high *God*, and supreme Governour of the World, is not regarded; but Ambition, and an unbounded Love of all the Tokens of Power, reign in the Hearts of many of the Rulers here below; therefore it is, that we have heard and seen so frequently the Characters of Inhumanity in the World, and Rivers of Blood shed, and Thousands of Lives sacrificed, to the Will and Humour of one Man; therefore it is, that we see Engines of Destruction invented and improved; all the Arts of Dissimulation to inveigle and cheat, and of Ruine and Violence

lence to destroy, more studied, and in more <sup>S E R M.</sup> Repute, than the Arts of Peace, and the whole <sup>xxii.</sup> Band of Social Virtues. But these Methods are u not learnt from that great Governour of Heaven and Earth, who ought to be the great Pattern of the Mighty. For He is never represented to us to be more *delighted*, than when the Rules of his Government permit him to shower down his Blessings ; and never more *grieved*, or acting with more Reluctance, than when He is constrained, as it were, by the same just Rules of Government, to pour his Wrath upon any People, or Nation. But,

II. We may and ought to observe, that Almighty *God* doth not so wish and desire the *Prosperity of Nations*, but that there are Conditions to be performed on *their* Part, without which he will not save them from Destruction. For Instance, It is absolutely necessary that they call up all their own Prudence, and enter into the best Counsels they can procure ; that they take all Opportunities, and make use of all the most probable Methods, of preventing their own Destruction, by applying Wisdom against Wisdom, Force against Force, and using the honest Arts of this World, under the Conduct and Blessing of God. They must not forget to implore the favourable Eye and kind

S E R M. kind Providence of that *God*, who sits over  
xxii. all ; and can dispose the Fate of *Kingdoms* and  
Nations ; and they must, at the same time, make use of the *Assistances*, He has put into their Hands, by his good Providence ; rememb-  
bring that He will not alone work Miracles for them, whilst They stand still and will do no-  
thing for themselves. To this Purpose I can-  
not forbear to call to mind that, in that Storm,  
in which St. *Paul* was shipwrecked (*Act*s xxvii.) tho' an *Angel* of *God* had assured him that there should be no Loss of any Man's Life a-  
mongst them ; yet, when *the Ship-men were* going to flee out of the *Ship*, *Paul* said to the Centurion, *except these abide on the Ship, ye can- not be saved.* So sensible was He, that when *God* promises to save any Persons, either their Lives or Estates, He never means to exclude their own Endeavours ; but always requires the same Efforts and Behaviour from Them ; as if they were to be saved wholly by their own Power and Wisdom.

And as one Part of that Wisdom which *God* requires of a *Nation*, in order to their Happi-  
ness, is to use all their own Endeavours against the Designs of their *Common Enemy* ; all that Strength of *Mind*, and Force of Arms, with which They are blessed ; so, another Part of it is, to be *united* amongst themselves ; to bury all in-  
testine

testine Quarrels and Animosities in their one S E R M. common Interest ; and not to allow themselves in the least Thought of incensing, or vexing, or oppressing one another, whilst their *All* lies at stake, and they are engaged in the Defense of their one whole common Interest. For this mutual Ill-will doth naturally tend to their own Ruine and Destruction. Their Enemies so well know this, that they never fail to endeavour to bring it about, where it is not ; and to make a sad use of it where it is, by improving it to their own Purposes. Nor will *God* resist, and hinder, the *natural* Tendency of what is founded upon the Folly and Imprudence of Those who might know better. When a *Nation* is collected within itself ; and has a Centre, in which the Parts of it all meet ; and one common Purpose in view, on which its Happiness entirely depends ; and no little Interests and divided Plots moving in it ; how formidable is that Nation, and how difficult to be overpowered and undone by any Enemies ? They therefore, who first begin to scatter Jealousies and Uneasinesses in it ; to disunite any Parts of it from the others, let it be under what Pretence it will, are the first who lessen, weaken, and dissolve its Strength ; the first who give Life and Encouragement to its Enemies : little considering into what Mischiefs such

S E R M. such Beginnings have been improved, thro the  
xxii. Cunning of *Adversaries*, on one side, and the  
Weaknesses and Passions of human Nature, on  
the other.

There are some *Nations* so blessed by Providence, and enjoying such Advantages from *Nature*, always to be improved by *Art*, that a close Union amongst themselves would be the greatest and most probable of all earthly *Securities* to them; and such a Fence of Safety, as would be strong enough against the Force of All the Powers of this World united against them. And perhaps, this may be one Reason why we often see such a *Nation* the farthest of all others, from desiring, or contriving, or effecting, that lasting and good Union within themselves, which would make their *Natural Defense* so secure and unmoveable. They are certain, indeed, of being taught, by frequent Experience, that *God* will not keep off the Danger and Fear of their Ruine, without it; but it is often seen, that they will not let that Experience itself have that Effect upon them which it ought to have.

I cannot here pass over in Silence the Sense of *Abraham* in this Matter; a Person, who had a greater Title to Prosperity and Happiness, *without* his own Wisdom, than any *Nation* upon Earth can pretend to. *God* had promised

him, to give him a most desireable Land; and ~~S E R M.~~ to make of him a glorious People: yet, he ~~xxii.~~ knew perfectly well, that intestine Quarrels and ~~~~~ Dissensions amongst Him, and his Relations and Friends, would be of fatal Consequence to him, and ruine all his future Hopes. The sacred *Historian* leaves it upon Record, as a Matter of some Moment, (Gen. xiii. 5. &c.) that *the Substance of Abraham and Lot was great, So that they could not dwell together*; and the Consequence of this was, that *there was a Strife between the Herdsman of Abraham's Cattle, and the Herdsman of Lot's Cattle*; and, the same *Historian* remarks, that *the Canaanite and Perizxite dwelt in the Land, i. e. Abraham and Lot dwelt amongst Nations, which were Enemies to them both*; and therefore, ready enough to make use of all Opportunities, and take all Advantages, in order to ruine and extirpate them. And we find *Abraham*, so sensible of the ill Consequence of this Quarrel, if he should insist upon what he in Justice might have demanded; that he yields up all his own Concerns to the Concerns of Peace, and to the common Interest: *Let there be no Strife*, says he, *betwixt Me and Thee, and betwixt my Herdsman and thy Herdsman; for we be Brethren. Is not the whole Land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the Left Hand, I will go to the*   
 H h Right;

SE R M. Right; ver; if thou depart to the Right, I will go  
xxii. to the Left. What greater Instance of Goodness,  
and Condescension, and Regard to the common  
Concern of both, could we possibly imagine?

But how different is this, from the Violence  
of Those, who give themselves up to the Study  
of a particular Interest; and make the present  
exalting of *that*, the main Bent of their Thoughts  
and Labours, to such a Degree, that, even when  
the Whole is in Danger, They are seen rather  
to give the common Enemy an Advantage, than  
let go an Opportunity of revenging Themselves  
upon Others, or raising their own Power and  
Interest above theirs? But in this Temper there  
can be little, or indeed nothing, of that Pub-  
lic-spiritedness, which is so necessary to the  
Happiness of a Nation; and which must be  
guided by these Principles, That whatever is for  
the Interest and Security of the *Whole*, ought  
most readily to be followed and practised, by  
*all* the Members of the *Whole*; and still more,  
that whatever is contrary to that, ought, for that  
very Reason, to be, upon the *first* Thought,  
rejected and condemned, tho' it tend to what  
we otherwise most earnestly wish; on some pri-  
vate and particular Account: And farther, that  
Nothing indeed can be for the Interest of a *Part*,  
in the *End*, which is not for the Interest of  
the *Whole*, in the Fate of which that *Part* must  
be

be involved. This is what we may fairly gather SE R M to have been the Wisdom of *Abraham* in such a xxii. ~~~~~ Conjunction; and this (we may fairly conclude, from the natural Tendency of mutual Jealousies and intestine Differences) is the most interesting Point, which a *Nation* ought to regard, when its All is at Stake; and such an Instance of Wisdom as Almighty *God* expects, from all *Societies*, upon the same Occasions.

III. I come now to the *Third Observation* proposed from the Text, *viz.* that the *Consideration of their latter End*, ought to be of great Force to move all *Nations* to prevent their own Misery and *Dissolution*, by such Methods, as their great *Gouverneur* has, either by Reason or Revelation, laid before Them: and particularly, by utterly forsaking those Vices, which otherwise must be their Ruine.

I shall not here repeat, what I have often, upon like Occasions, observed to you, concerning the *Dealings of God* with wicked, incorrigible Nations, recorded in the *Old Testament*. But I shall add that, even under the *Gospel*, we have had a fresh Declaration of this, in the Lecture our blessed Lord read to the *Jews*, (*Luke xiii.*) upon the Subject of certain severe and extraordinary *Providences* that had happened to *some* particular Persons of that Nation. *Suppose ye*, says he, (*ver. 2.*) *that those Galileans*.

S E R M. whose Blood Pilate mingled with their Sacrifices,  
XXII. were Sinners above all the Galileans, because they  
suffered such things ? I tell you, Nay ; but, Except ye r pent, ye shall all likewise perish : Or, those Eighteen upon whom the Tower in Siloe fell, and slew them, Think ye that they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in Jerusalem ? I tell you, Nay ; but, Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. For these Words are a Declaration of the temporal Destruction of a whole People, and not an Account of God's Dealing with private Persons ; and they were designed to signify, that, as these Persons mentioned were slain by a sad and uncommon Calamity, so, that the whole Nation of the Jews should be brought to Desolation, by a more terrible Calamity, unless they prevented it, by a timely and sincere Repentance, and Acceptance of his Offers : As if He had said to them — “ This is the *Lesson* I would have you learn from these Events, that You yourselves, “ as a *Nation*, shall so perish, in an uncommon “ Manner, by the just Judgment of God : and “ not, that such calamitous Events, which God, “ in the Course of his Providence, does not “ think fit to prevent, are designed, as Subjects “ for your censorious Tempers ; or as *Arguments*, that Those particular Persons on whom “ He suffered them to fall, were greater Sin- “ ners than Those on whom they did not fall.”

And

And now, it cannot be at all improper to ob- s E R M. serve that, even without the extraordinary De- xxii. clarations of *God* himself, against sinful *Nations*, in the Holy Scriptures ; *That*, I say, the Consideration of the *Natural Consequences* of *Things*, will itself convince us, that there is not a more certain Sign of any one thing in *Nature*, than the universal *Virtue*, or abandoned *Wickedness*, of a *Nation* is, of their flourishing Condition, or of their Tendency to Ruine. If Benevolence, and Charity, and all the Parts of true Religion, abound, and are universally practised and encouraged in a Land, *Happy will it be for the People that are in such a Case*, even in the ordinary Course of this World, constituted and appointed by *God* himself. But if Iniquity run down amongst them with a mighty Stream ; and all Degrees of Vice abound and flourish in a Nation, what will *their latter End be*? It must fare with them, as it has fared, not only with the *Jews*, but with other Nations, whether *Greeks*, *Romans*, or *Barbarians* ; who have been seen to lose the Glory acquired by them in their former State of rigid *Virtue* ; and to waste away by Degrees ; in exact Proportion to their Improvements in *Vice* and *Luxury* : and, at last to be totally lost and ruined, by the genuine Operation of their own Corruptions. Thus must *They*, who imitate them in their *Degeneracy*, imitate.

SER M. imitate them in their inglorious and deplorable  
XXII. End also ; and inherit the *Destruction* which is  
the natural Consequence of such universal Dis-  
soluteness of Manners.

I have thus gone over the *three Observations*, I proposed from the *Text* ; and should now pro-  
ceed to apply what has been said to Ourselves  
and our own Circumstances. But I have left  
myself not much Time to do it ; and, I hope,  
not much Occasion to spend many Words upon  
it. As Almighty God has a very great Concern  
for the Happiness and Welfare of Nations and  
Societies of Men : so, He has, in a particular  
Manner, shewn himself concerned for us, if we  
may judge by those frequent Instances of his  
Mercy which He has poured down upon us ; and  
by the long Trial He has vouchsafed to give us,  
whether we will turn unto him or not ; by those  
Evils He has from time to time sent amongst us ;  
by those Fears and Dangers He has sometimes  
brought upon us, to awaken us ; and those won-  
derful and surprizing *Deliverances* He has  
vouchsafed us, above all our Hopes and Expec-  
tations. He waits upon us, even yet ; and still  
tries us with repeated Instances of his Love and  
Kindness. How long He will do so, He only  
knows. Would to God, I could say that we had  
made him any Returns agreeable to so much  
Love and Long-suffering ; or that we seem yet  
to

to be disposed for Happiness. We are now in ~~S E R M.~~  
some Danger again, as We are engaged in the xxii.  
Defense of Ourselves, as well as our Neighbours,  
against a very powerful and cunning Enemy.  
This is our common Cause, and the common  
Interest of every Member of this Nation.

Whether there be any amongst us who wish  
well to this formidable Enemy, is not our pre-  
sent Enquiry. But that which looks very ill,  
amongst all our Preparations against him, is  
this, That we do not hate this public *Enemy*  
more than we hate *one another*; that we are  
not more glad of an Opportunity of bringing  
him low, than we are of depressing one an-  
other; that we are not more filled with a just  
Resentment and Indignation against Him, than  
we are with mutual Resentment and Indigna-  
tion against one another at Home; that we can  
find time, when all our Thoughts ought to be  
wholly taken up against the common Adver-  
sary, to invent, and attempt, and prosecute,  
what may irritate one another; and disturb Our  
own Quiet at Home; and by this contribute Our  
selves to the Strength and Advantage, of our  
*Enemies Abroad.*

If any please themselves with the Thought,  
that our *Enemies* are as wicked, and as bad as  
Ourselves, it must still be owned, that They  
are much more diligent in the using all Means

S E R M. that have a natural Tendency to effect their  
XXII. Purposes; and have a closer and more con-  
stant Union within themselves, than we can  
pretend to: and that it is certain also, that  
God often makes use of one very wicked Na-  
tion, to ruine and destroy another: *Especially*,  
when this other has had more of his Favours;  
enjoyed more Light; and sinned against greater  
Conviction, and greater Mercies. I do not  
presage Evil to us. But we must not flatter our-  
selves, and be too secure. Thankfulness for  
former Mercies; Repentance for that Ingrati-  
tude, that has been shewn in Return for them;  
Reformation of our Lives; a public and uni-  
form Encouragement and Regard to *Virtue*;  
and as public and constant a Discouragement of  
Vice and Immorality; Love to one another,  
and universal Charity; and a prudent Use of all  
the Means put into our hands by Providence:  
—These are the things which will not only  
prevent the *Ruine*, which all the Efforts of  
our most powerful Enemies can threaten Us  
with; but fix our Happiness secure, upon  
as strong a Foundation, as the State of this  
World can admit of. *O that we were wise,*  
*that we understood this, that we would consider*  
*our latter End!*



